

## Global glare

American socialite Kim Kardashian reveals that the Ambani wedding ceremony will be a part of the reality TV show, *The Kardashians*

LEISURE | P2



## China blasts US

China expresses strong opposition to a US law signed by President Joe Biden that presses Beijing to resolve a dispute over Tibet's demands

INTERNATIONAL | P10



## Softbank exits Paytm

Japan's Softbank investment arm Softbank Vision Fund exits from Paytm in June quarter at a loss of around \$150 million

BUSINESS | P11



## Clash of titans

Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz will take on Novak Djokovic in the Wimbledon 2024 men's singles final today

SPORTS | P12

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## 3 tourists killed, 14 hurt as bus hits truck

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Baripada, July 13:** Three persons were killed and 14 injured Saturday after a bus in which they were travelling hit a truck from behind in Mayurbhanj district, police said.

The accident took place around 5.30 am on National Highway 18 near Budikhamari Square under Betanati police limits, when the bus with around 20 pilgrims on board rammmed into the commercial vehicle, a senior officer said.

The bus was going towards Gaya from Hyderabad when the accident occurred.

"One of the deceased has been identified as bus driver Uday Singh of Charminar area of Hyderabad," the officer added.

The injured passengers were taken to Pandit Raghunath Murmu Medical College and Hospital, Baripada.

Additional District Medical Officer Bijay Kumar Das said the driver died on the spot while two others succumbed to their injuries while undergoing treatment. Fourteen injured people are under treatment at the medical college, he said. The truck driver escaped from the spot after the accident, the officer added.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi declared ₹2 lakh ex-gratia each to mishap victims.



**FRANTIC SEARCH:** Scuba diving team of the fire department conducts a search and rescue operation after a sanitation worker went missing inside the Amayizhanjan canal in Thiruvananthapuram, Saturday

## FIRE AT CUTTACK NURSING HOME

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Fire broke out at a private nursing home in Cuttack Saturday evening triggering panic among the patients. Three fire tenders were working to douse the blaze that broke out at the healthcare facility, located near the Purighat police station, around 4.30 pm, said officials.

Director-General of Fire Services Sudhanshu Sarangi said the blaze was under control, but smoke was still there.

"We are trying to deal with the smoke by using exhausts. We have already shifted the patients admitted in the ICU. About 12 newborn babies were there. They need NICU, so the Chief Minister's Office and the Health Department are coordinating to move them to proper healthcare facilities," Sarangi said.

The fire broke on the first floor of the nursing home, he said. Some patients were also shifted to the state-run SCB Medical College and Hospital, another official said. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, he said.

On the other hand, CM Mohan Charan Majhi ordered a probe into the incident and assured that all medical expenses of the injured patients will be borne by the government.

## ASSAULT ON ASO Cong, BJD for action against Guv's son

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Opposition parties in Odisha, including the BJD and Congress, have demanded action against Governor Raghubar Das' son following allegations that he and five others assaulted an assistant section officer (ASO) at the Raj Bhavan in Puri.

ASO Baikuntha Pradhan, Friday claimed that he was physically assaulted by Das' son Lalit Kumar and his associates while supervising President Droupadi Murmu's visit July 7.

Meanwhile, during a protest outside Raj Bhavan here, Congress's youth and student wing NSUI demanded that an FIR be filed against Kumar. Similarly, BJD's Pratap Keshari Deb condemned the incident, questioning police's inaction and urging Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi to ensure justice.

In a fresh development, the Governor discussed the issue with Pradhan's wife.

"The Governor heard everything and assured us to deliver justice," she said in her reaction.

## BYPOLL RESULTS

# Landslide for INDIA

The poor show of the BJP in elections continues with Opposition INDIA putting up a spectacular performance in the Assembly bypolls held in seven states. While the saffron party candidates failed miserably by bagging just two out of 13 seats, result for which were announced Saturday, INDIA constituents romped home with a total of 10 seats. Experts say if the election results are any indication, the BJP is steadily losing voters' confidence with the fortune tilting in INDIA's favour

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 13:** INDIA bloc parties won 10 Assembly seats, while the BJP managed two and an Independent one, as votes were counted Saturday for the by-elections held earlier this week for 13 seats in seven states.

The bypolls were held Wednesday in four seats in West Bengal, three in Himachal Pradesh, two in Uttarakhand, and one each in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu.

The Congress, TMC, AAP and DMK are among the INDIA bloc

parties that fielded candidates in the bypolls.

In Punjab, Mohinder Bhagat of the ruling AAP won the Jalandhar West seat by defeating his nearest rival and BJP nominee Sheetal Angural by a margin of 37,325 votes, the Election Commission (EC) said.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann said the victory with a big lead in the seat shows that the people of the state are 'very happy' with his government's work.

In Tamil Nadu, the ruling DMK's Anniyur Siva emerged victorious in the Vikravandi Assembly constituency.

He defeated his nearest rival - NDA constituent Patali Makkal Katchi's Ambumani C -- by a margin of 67,757 votes.

On the four seats in West Bengal, TMC candidate Krishna Kalyani defeated BJP's Manas Kumar Ghosh by a margin of 50,077 votes in the Raiganj Assembly seat, and Mukut Nami Adhikari defeated BJP's Manoj Kumar Biswas by 74,485 votes in Ranaghat Dakshin.

TMC's Madhuparna Thakur defeated BJP's Binay Kumar



**“The results show that the people have completely rejected the arrogance, misgovernance and negative politics of the BJP”**

MALLIKARJUN KHARGE | CONGRESS PRESIDENT

Biswas by 74,251 votes in Bagda, and Supti Pandey defeated BJP's Kalyan Choubey by 62,312 votes, according to the EC.

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu's wife and Congress candidate Kamlesh Thakur defeated BJP's Hoshiyar Singh by a margin of 9,399 votes to win the Dehra assembly seat.

In Nalagarh, Congress'

Hardeep Singh Bawa won against BJP's KL Thakur by 25,618 votes.

The BJP won the Hamirpur seat with its candidate Ashish Sharma polling 27,041 votes against Congress' Pushpinder Verma 25,470 votes, the website showed. In Uttarakhand, the Congress' candidates for the Badrinath and Manglaur bypolls -- Lakhat Singh Butola and Qazi Mohammad Nizamuddin -- won their seats, according to the poll panel.

While Butola won the Badrinath seat by defeating former minister and MLA BJP's Rajendra Singh Bhandari by 5,224 votes, Nizamuddin defeated BJP's Kartar Singh Bhadana by a slender margin of 422 votes.

In Madhya Pradesh, BJP's Kamlesh Pratap Shah won the Amarwara assembly seat by a margin of 3,027 votes against Congress' Dheeran Sah Invati, while in Bihar, Independent candidate Shankar Singh won the Rupauli seat, defeating his nearest rival -- JD(U)'s Kaladhar Prasad Mandal -- by a margin of 8,246 votes, the EC website showed.

## Snake catcher to enter Ratna Bhandar first

AGENCIES

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** A snake catcher will enter the Ratna Bhandar at Srimandir first when it will be reopened Sunday, after 46 years. Law Minister Prithiviraj Harichandan Saturday said the reopening procedure will begin after 1 pm.

The minister mentioned that CM Mohan Charan Majhi has approved the proposal to open the Ratna Bhandar, which was last opened in 1978. He further said the assistance of the RBI would be taken to ensure transparency.

"We are fully prepared for the reopening of the Ratna Bhandar Sunday. We will strictly adhere to the standard operating procedures issued by the government in accordance with the Shree Jagannath Temple Act," Puri District Collector Siddharth Shankar Swain said.

"The 16-member high-level committee constituted by the state government recommended reopening the Ratna Bhandar July 14. Following traditional attire, we will first offer prayers to Lord Lokanath inside the temple,"

said Soumendra Muduli, a member of the special committee chaired by retired Justice Biswanath Rath of Orissa High Court. "As a precautionary measure, authorised personnel and a snake catcher will first enter the treasury," Muduli added.

Haladhara Dasmohapatra, chief servitor of Lord Balabhadra, addressing rumours of a guardian snake inside the treasury, clarified that there is no such impediment and urged people to approach with pure intentions. He advised the government against weighing the stored valuables, suggesting instead a count and resealing of the items.

According to a senior temple servitor, Ratna Bhandar consists of three parts - the outer chamber holding ornaments used in rituals, the inner chamber housing non-utilised jewellery and other precious items donated by kings and devotees over centuries. In 2018, then Law Minister Pratap Jena had informed that Ratna Bhandar had over 1,48,840 gm of gold ornaments along with other valuables.

## IRREGULAR by MANJUL



Every hospital should have one. This is where we treat people beaten by VVIPs

**WEATHER**

BBSR	CTC
Max Temp 34.5°C	34.6°C
Min Temp 26.0°C	25.0°C
Humidity 89%	75%
Rainfall 0.2mm	Nil

**FORECAST**

Partly cloudy sky with possibility of moderate rain

## Huge architectural wealth beneath Mahabodhi temple

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Patna, July 13:** A geospatial analysis utilising satellite images and ground surveys has found evidence of the presence of huge architectural wealth buried in the Mahabodhi temple complex and its surroundings in Bihar's Bodhi Gaya, officials said Saturday.

The study has been carried out by the Bihar Heritage Development Society (BHDS) in collaboration with the Cardiff University of the United Kingdom.

The Mahabodhi temple complex, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is one of the four holy areas related to the life of Lord Gautam Buddha.

Both Gaya is a place where Lord Buddha is believed to have attained enlightenment.

"The study has unearthed evidence of the presence of archaeological treasure beneath the soil of the UNESCO World Heritage site and its surround-

ing areas...It's a huge architectural wealth that needs further excavation," the Art, Culture and Youth Department's Additional Chief Secretary Harjot Kaur Bamhrah told this agency.

The UK-based varsity and the BHDS are cooperating in the project titled *Archaeology on the footsteps of the Chinese traveller Xuanzang*.

Bangalore-based National Institute of Advanced Studies faculty member MB Rajni, one of the project members, studied satellite images of the Mahabodhi temple and its surroundings and tried to correlate the findings with the description of Xuanzang, she said.

The present Mahabodhi temple complex at Bodhi Gaya comprises the 50-metre-high grand temple, the Vajrasana, the sacred Bodhi tree and other six sacred sites of Buddha's enlightenment, surrounded by numerous ancient stupas, well maintained and protected by inner, middle and outer circular



boundaries. "The BHDS in association with Cardiff University has been working on the multidisciplinary project on the archaeolog-

ical trail of the travel of 7th-century Chinese translator monk, Xuanzang, in Bihar. The satellite images from the last several years show an alignment of struc-

tures to the north of the temple, buried underground," said Bamhrah.

Significantly, the images show the shift of the river Niranjana from east to west. "Let us remember that the Mahabodhi temple is west of the river, and the Sujata Stupa and several other archaeological remains are located east of the river. The monuments and other archaeological remains in the east of the river are now regarded to be independent of the Mahabodhi temple.

"But the latest finding shows that both the temple and the Sujata stupa along with other archaeological remains stood on the same river bank in the past," she said.

Bamhrah said this is really "very significant."

"Thus, there is a strong possibility that the monuments and other archaeological remains, now east of the river, were a part of the Mahabodhi complex," the official said.

## More powers to J&K L-G; Opposition slams move

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi/Srinagar, July 13:** The Centre has significantly strengthened the authority of the Lieutenant Governor in Jammu and Kashmir, empowering him to make decisions on crucial matters such as police, and all-India services officers and granting sanctions for prosecution in various cases.

The opposition slammed the Union government's move and termed it a step towards 'disempowering' the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Union Home Ministry gave more powers to the L-G Friday by amending rules framed under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. This act, passed alongside the abrogation of Article 370, bifurcated the erstwhile state into two Union Territories - Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The L-G's authority extends further to the appointment of the Advocate General and other law officers.

# leisure



## HARRY PAYS TRIBUTE TO CHRISTINE McVIE

Singer-actor Harry Styles surprised the audience at the BST gig in Hyde Park, London, by joining Stevie Nicks on stage. Styles sang *Landslide* with Nicks and a heartfelt homage was paid to Christine McVie, Stevie's late bandmate, reports *Mirror.co.uk*.

## MURPHY WEDS LONG-TIME PARTNER PAIGE BUTCHER

Actor-comedian Eddie Murphy is now married to actress Paige Butcher. The Oscar nominee, and the Australian actress, got married in Anguilla during a small private ceremony in front of family and close friends, reports *People magazine*.



### FORTUNE FORECAST

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**ARIES**  
So what if plans that you had earlier made have not materialised. You will make a reassessment today, and by mid-day you will sort out a lot of things which will boost your confidence. Ganesh says such is life and you have to keep on trying till you succeed.

**TAURUS**  
Ganesh sees your cultural and literary tastes coming to the fore. Today you will venture into the realm of history, religion, philosophy, art and cultures. You will be drawn to the profound thoughts of psychology and spirituality. In the evening you will probably be visiting some place of worship and spending time in prayer and meditation.

**GEMINI**  
A hectic and challenging day awaits you. You will be busy with your family members and children, tending to their needs. New deadlines at work may put pressure on you. Love and romance will give you the fuel needed to keep going, says Ganesh.

**CANCER**  
You will be quite sentimental and emotional today, you will help needy relatives. You will reach new heights in romantic interlude. Ganesh indicates that a member of the opposite sex will attract you and you reap full advantage of this attraction.

**LEO**  
There is no other way out of your current predicament except hard work. You will need to decide whether you want to work hard to achieve your goals, or let them slip by in pursuit of leisure. It is in your best interests to make some effort now to reap substantial gains later, says Ganesh.

**VIRGO**  
Today will be a creative and beneficial day for you at your workplace. In the afternoon, Ganesh says, you will be in your element. With your professional acumen, you will succeed in sharing your ideas with your boss and getting his approval. You will be free in the evening to indulge in lavishing your affection on your beloved.

**LIBRA**  
Ganesh says that a person of the opposite sex will be attracted to you and this may lead to a romantic relationship in the near future. This is a good time for you to clear any doubts that your life partner may have with regards to you. For those who are single this is a good time to propose to your loved one. Today whatever work you undertake will be successful with the blessings of Ganesh.

**SCORPIO**  
Your far sightedness will make you realise the importance of financial security. Thus, you are in a mood to make long term investments. Social recognition awaits you in the evening. Ganesh feels that people look up to you as a wise person and thus seek high values from you.

**SAGITTARIUS**  
You may feel as if you are caught in a rat race and for you it has become important of survive it. Though it is challenging enough, you are excited to get a new mission in life. Take a break in the evening and enjoy it with family and friends, says Ganesh.

**CAPRICORN**  
Excitement is in the air, especially in your personal life. You will receive some extremely positive news, it may be related to one of your family members or to all of them. With encouraging remarks and rewards for your efforts, professional life seems good, too. But, don't let your confidence turn into over-confidence as you may commit an irreversible mistake, warns Ganesh.

**AQUARIUS**  
You will most likely play a peace envoy today, sorting out conflicts with diplomacy, your own as well as others'. Don't ignore any offer on the career front, as it may be the best thing to happen to you! The evening brings romance, says Ganesh, but also a lovers' tiff.

**PISCES**  
Hard work and dedication will rule the roost today but all your work and effort won't be in vain, says Ganesh. You will spend your entire day over a problem or to achieve your goal but before the end of the day it will be well within your reach.

# Apoorva bats for women's health

**Mumbai:** Actress Apoorva Arora, who was recently seen in the streaming series *Family Aaj Kal*, has voiced her concerns about the need for proper healthcare for women.

The actress, who has battled PCOD (Polycystic Ovarian Disease)-related symptoms, said that despite significant advances in medical science and healthcare, there remains a notable lack of research focused on the female body. PCOD is a hormonal imbalance condition that disrupts the normal fertility cycle in women.

Raising an important question, Apoorva told *IANS*, "This gap in understanding hinders progress in improving women's health and well-being. Women make up half of the world's population, and if they are not receiving optimal healthcare, it calls into question our progress as a society."

The actress further said: "Historically, women have been underrepresented in positions of authority and have often not received recognition for their scientific achievements. Addressing these issues, though seemingly small steps, is crucial for achieving gender equality in healthcare and ensuring that the needs of all are met."

The actress also shared insights on how yoga has helped her relieve PCOD-related symptoms. The actress said that yoga has been crucial in her fitness journey. She tried multiple forms of exercise, but it turns out that yoga has been the most sustainable for her.



# Ambani wedding to feature on The Kardashians

**Mumbai:** American socialite and reality TV star Kim Kardashian, who attended Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant's wedding with sister Khloe Kardashian in Mumbai, has revealed the lavish ceremony will be a part of their reality TV show, *The Kardashians*.

Kim and Khloe were among several international celebrities who arrived in India to attend the nuptials of Anant and Radhika, held Friday night at Mumbai's Jio World Drive.

In a previous video shared by Khloe on social media, a production crew with cameras, lights, and microphones was seen following the sister duo around, and some eagle-eyed fans suspected they were shooting for *The Kardashians*.

In her latest post on her Instagram Story, Kim posted a screenshot of a video of her and Khloe after they got ready ahead of the high-profile ceremony and shared that they were indeed filming for their popular reality series. "Had to screen grab our video bc we're just so happy to be lucky enough to travel the world together! And duh we were filming *The Kardashians* too so you guys can see Kim and Khloe take India," she wrote.

Both the sisters, styled by Dani Levi, were dressed in custom-made designs and jewellery by celebrity-favourite designer Manish Malhotra. While Kim was draped in a glittering red lehenga-saree, Khloe opted for an ivory-gold lehenga-saree with heavy embellishments.

*The Kardashians*, which streams on India on Disney+ Hotstar, focuses on the personal lives of the Kardashian-Jenner family.



# Neha breaks stereotype

**Mumbai:** Actress Neha Sharma, who essays the role of Farah in the new crime thriller *36 Days*, shared that no one ever imagined that she could pull off a grey character.

Discussing her casting in the show, Neha shared, "I don't think anyone ever imagined that I could pull off a grey character, so when the makers approached me for *36 Days*, I was genuinely thrilled. I had watched a bit of the original BBC show, *35 Days*, and thought it was absolutely mind-bending."

"So, when they considered me to play a role in an adaptation of this, I was really excited to be a part of it. Being involved in this project is something I've looked forward to. I'm eager to see how the audience reacts and hope they enjoy it," she added.

Directed by Vishal Furia, the story unveils dark secrets, betrayals, and forbidden truths lying beneath the surface. Produced by Applause Entertainment in association with BBC Studios India, *36 Days* is the official Indian adaptation of the UK show *35 Days* and is currently streaming on Sony LIV.



# Kalki mints ₹1,000cr at BO

**Mumbai:** The juggernaut of *Kalki 2898 AD* shows no signs of slowing down, as the sci-fi spectacle hit ₹1,000 crore milestones in box office collections worldwide.

Starring Amitabh Bachchan, Kamal Haasan, Prabhas, and Deepika Padukone in the lead, *Kalki 2898 AD* is a mythological and sci-fi action drama that was released, June 27 in theatres around the world in six languages.

Saturday, the makers shared a poster on X with 'Epic Maha Blockbuster 1000 crore +' embossed on it and expressed gratitude to the audience. The banner said, "1000 CRORES and counting. This milestone is a celebration of your love. We poured our hearts into this film, and you embraced it with open hearts. Thank you to the audience across the world."

*Kalki 2898 AD* also stars Disha Patani, Saswata Chatterjee, and Shobhana.



### PEANUTS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS

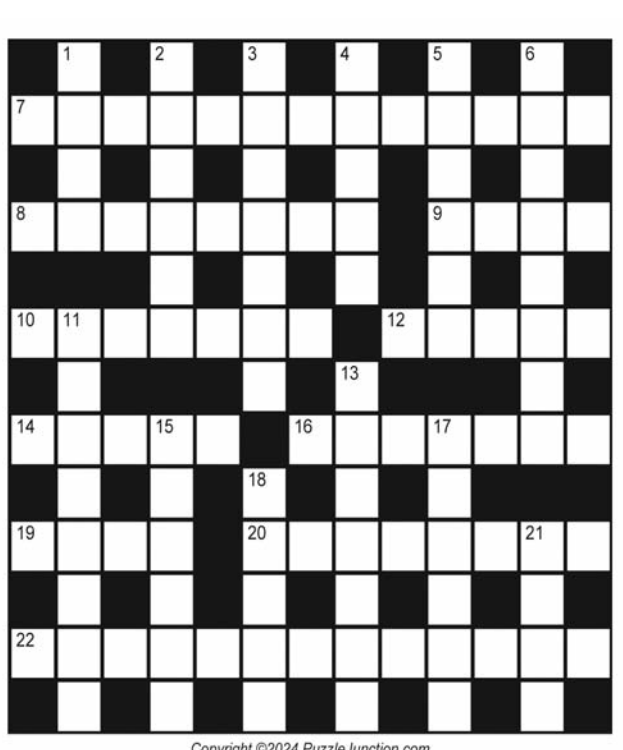


### BREVITY



### FUN post

### CROSSWORD



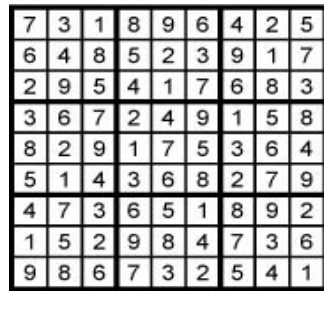
- Across**
- 7 Noted British trait (5,5,3)
  - 8 Movie review warnings
  - 9 Precious stone
  - 10 Theatrical role
  - 12 Investment
  - 14 Geologic period
  - 16 Honesty
  - 19 Banned apple spray
  - 20 Get it together, maybe
  - 22 Shmooze fest
- Down**
- 1 At the peak
  - 2 Workplace
  - 3 Willingly obedient
  - 4 Paroxysm
  - 5 Plant disease (3-3)
  - 6 City in central Mali
  - 11 French pastry
  - 13 Hybrid juicy fruit
  - 15 Decanter
  - 17 Be generous
  - 18 Sideline
  - 21 Hogwash

### SUDOKU

To solve the Sudoku puzzle, fill in the boxes in such a manner that every row, column and 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.



### SOLUTIONS



CHECK FOR SOLUTIONS OF THE PUZZLES TOMORROW

## FELICITATION CEREMONY

Dignitaries felicitating renowned physician Prof Dr Niranjana Tripathy with Prof Pranakrushna Parija Samman during a programme organised at Sarala Bhawan in Cuttack Saturday



## Now, LED video walls to empower farmers

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** In yet another move towards ensuring faster dissemination of government's initiatives and policies for welfare of farmers, the state government inaugurated 58 outdoor LED video walls at district headquarters or sub-divisions of Odisha Saturday.

Inaugurating the video walls through videoconferencing from Krushi Bhawan here, Agriculture and Farmers' Empowerment (A&FE) Minister Kanak Vardhan Singh Deo requested the district-level officials to cooperate with the department and make efforts for smooth dissemination of information related to agriculture.

"I pray to Lord Jagannath for the prosperity of the Agriculture department," Singh Deo, who is also a Deputy Chief Minister, said.

Interacting with the farmers and district officials in virtual mode, the Agriculture minister took stock of arrangements at their level to make the initiative a big success.

According to sources in know of the development, the outdoor LED video walls will help faster and effective dissemination of information related to

**Key information on best agricultural practices and weather alerts will reach farmers in real time, thereby benefitting a large section of peasants**

various initiatives and policies of government for the welfare of farmers. "Key information on best agricultural practices and weather alerts will reach farmers in real time. This intervention will significantly benefit a large section of farmers ensuring that they are well aware and empowered to take informed agricultural decisions," they said.

The A&FE department adopting digital media of communication underscores its commitment to leverage digital interventions that would help empower farmers and enhance agricultural practices across the state, they pointed out.

Among others, A&FE Principal Secretary Arabinda Kumar Padhee and Agriculture and Food Production Director Prem Chandra Chaudhary were present on the occasion.



**READY FOR HOMECOMING:** Three chariots – Nandighosha, Taladhwaaja and Darpadalana – in front of Nakachana Dwara of Gundicha Temple in Puri were turned southward as part of Bahuda rituals Saturday

## MAN HELD FOR DOWRY TORTURE

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Bharatpur police here Saturday arrested a 30-year-old man for allegedly assaulting his wife over dowry and seized an iron rod used in the crime, said a police official.

Inspector in-charge (IIC) of Bharatpur police station Dinakrushna Mishra said the accused identified as Ranjan Dakua, a native of Ganjam district, had tied nuptial knots several years ago. However, their conjugal life went through rough patches as he demanded dowry from his in-laws. Later, he harassed and assaulted his wife for dowry. He would return home drunk and have fights with her wife.

"However, this escalated Thursday when Ranjan demanded ₹200 from his wife for booze, and the later refused. During the quarrels, Ranjan attacked his wife with an iron rod, and fled the spot. This led to critical injuries on her head," said the IIC.

The victim lodged a complaint at Bharatpur police station seeking immediate action.

Ranjan has been booked under relevant Sections of BNS and produced before a local court Saturday.

## Priyanka slams BJP over Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas

AGENCIES

**New Delhi, July 13:** In a scathing attack on the BJP, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday said it comes as no surprise that those who opposed the Constitution and called for its abolition would indulge in the "negative politics" of marking 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas'.

Her remarks came a day after Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that the government has decided to observe June 25, the day Emergency was declared in 1975, as 'Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas' to commemorate the "massive contributions" of those who endured inhuman pains of the period.

Reacting to the development, Priyanka Gandhi said the great people of India have achieved Independence and their Constitution by fighting a historic battle.

"Those who made the Constitution, those who have faith in the Constitution, will only protect the Constitution," she said in a post in Hindi on 'X'.

## Nigerians among three held for ₹2.65cr fraud

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Three notorious cybercriminals, including two Nigerians, have been arrested from New Delhi for duping a resident here of ₹2.65 crore on the promise of high returns on investment in saffron business, Crime Branch (CB) sources said, Saturday.

The accused were identified as Arati Gautam, Christopher Chizobam alias Chizobam Krist and Nnamdi Stanley Mbamalu alias German, said CB inspector Bibhu Ranjan Sundaray.

About the crackdown, Sundaray said a resident of the Capital city approached them February 26 this year alleging that he has been defrauded by crooks who contacted him through social media.

Claiming himself as a former Odisha cadre IAS officer, one of the fraudsters approached the victim on Facebook in December 2023 and said that he was working at the World Bank in Washington DC, Sundaray said quoting the victim's complaint.

"During the course of social media conversations, the fraudster sent an email to the victim and offered him to join a project of supplying saffron to the World Bank headquarters. He asked the victim to contact the World Bank procurement department via email to express interest in the project. The fraudster then introduced the victim to a supplier, who pretended as a Regional



**The victim from Capital city had transferred ₹2,65,15,940 to the fraudsters to multiple bank accounts maintained in India**

Manager at Organics Merchandise, a marketing agent for saffron farmers in India," the CB inspector said.

"They started the business with initial supply of 10 kg saffron for testing, and later went up to 110 kg as per the fake purchase order from the World Bank. The victim paid ₹2,65,15,940 through multiple transactions to various bank accounts maintained in India. When the fraudster demanded more money, the victim realised the fraud and approached the Cyber Crime police station," he said.

Based on the complaint, a case (10/2024) was registered under Sections 419, 420, 465, 467, 468, 471, 120B and 34 of the IPC, and 66D of the IT Act, 2000 and a probe



was launched.

A team, led by Sundaray, conducted the probe and managed to nab Arati in New Delhi. "Subsequently, the two Nigerians were arrested," he said.

Six mobile phones, two laptops, 10 SIM cards, 10 bank passbooks, two debit cards and one Aadhaar card were recovered from them.

During probe, the CB learnt that Arati opened bank accounts in her name and in the names of others and shared these accounts with Christopher, who used them to transfer the fraudulently obtained money. Christopher was involved in collection of mule accounts to facilitate the receipt of the stolen money. Nnamdi withdrew the cash from ATMs and handed it over another Nigerian.

The CB learnt from the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) of I4C that the gang was involved in a series of cyber frauds across the country. "Their accounts have been involved in around 94 cases covering 10 states across the nation," the CB inspector said.

## EOW busts ₹600cr trading scam; 1 held

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the state Crime Branch here Saturday claimed to have busted a ₹600-crore trading scam and arrested the proprietor of a brokerage firm.

EOW Superintendent of Police (SP) Dilip Tripathy said the accused, identified as Saiyyad Jiyajur Rahaman, is a resident of Hooghly district in West Bengal. "Saiyyad runs LFS Broking and PMS Services through which he had duped at least 6,219 investors from Odisha, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar."

Saiyyad was detained at Kolkata Airport by Bureau of Immigration (BoI) upon his return from Dubai after a look out circular (LOC) was issued against him, said a senior EOW official. Giving more details about the trading scam, Tripathy said a probe was launched after a complaint was lodged by Arun Kumar Pattnaik, a victim of the fraud. He alleged that LFS Broking and PMS Services had cheated him of more than ₹20 lakh. "They had lured me by offering 2 per cent interest on the invested amount till the final payment," Arun said.

After duping the investors, the EOW SP said, Saiyyad used to transfer the funds to the brokerage firm's sisterly company Arambagh Hotel and Resort. His wives Habiba Begum and Ranjita Mahajan are said to be the directors of the company.

Preliminary investigations revealed that the company has



■ Saiyyad Jiyajur Rahaman, a resident West Bengal, was arrested for duping investors from Odisha, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Bihar

■ Arun Kumar Pattnaik, a victim of the fraud, alleged that LFS Broking and PMS Services had cheated him of more than ₹20 lakh

■ Saiyyad used to transfer the funds to the brokerage firm's sisterly company Arambagh Hotel and Resort

■ His wives Habiba Begum and Ranjita Mahajan are said to be the directors of the company

■ Securities and Exchange Board of India has banned Saiyyad as stock broker for five years following the serious complaint against him

siphoned off nearly ₹100 crore from investors in Odisha. Initially, he made monthly interest transfers for a brief period, but he stopped it later and went incommunicado.

Notably, Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has banned Saiyyad as stock broker for five years following the serious complaint against him.

The EOW has booked Saiyyad under relevant Sections of Odisha Protection of Interests of Depositors (OPID) Act, and produced him before a court here Saturday.

## CM to hear public grievances Monday

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will hear public grievances at the CM's Grievance Cell at Unit 5 here Monday.

Registration for the same will start from 8am till 12 O' clock while hearing of pleas will begin at 11am, said a release issued by the Information and Public Relations (I&PR) department.

"It is for the information of the general public that persons having genuine grievances will have to register their names and submit their complaints in writing. The same will be forwarded to the grievance cell for redressal," said a statement from the CMO.

**More than 5,000 people from across Odisha, including differently-abled persons, lined up July 1 before the grievance cell to present their problems before the CM**

Discontinued since 2020 after surge in Covid-19 cases, the Chief Minister's public grievance hearing was revived by Mohan Charan Majhi-led first BJP government in Odisha.

More than 5,000 people from across Odisha, including differently-abled persons, lined up July 1 before the grievance cell to present their problems before the CM. A total of 1,540 people had registered during the first day of hearing while Majhi personally met more than 1,000 people.

The Chief Minister had said that he would continue to listen to grievances from the public every Monday.

## Climate change blamed for deadly lightning strikes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 13:** Increased heating due to climate change is leading to more thunderstorm activities and consequently, more lightning strikes worldwide, senior scientists said Saturday.

At least 43 people were killed due to lightning strikes in Uttar Pradesh Thursday and 21 in Bihar Friday.

Most of the people killed were either transplanting paddy in fields, grazing cattle or taking shelter under trees to protect themselves from the rain.

Former secretary to Union Ministry of Earth Sciences, Madhavan Nair Rajeevan, said climate change is increasing the formation of convective or thunderstorm clouds.

"People have documented that

the frequency of thunderstorms is increasing everywhere, including India, due to climate change," he told PTI.

"Unfortunately, we do not have long-term data for lightning flashes to confirm an increase in incidents. However, we can conclude that global warming leads to more convective activity, resulting in more thunderstorms and, consequently, more lightning strikes," he said.

Rajeevan explained that lightning is attributed to deeper clouds with large vertical extensions.

"With climate change increasing the moisture-holding capacity of the air, more such clouds are forming," he added.

According to Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, lightning incidents in India increased by 30 to 40 per cent between 1995



and 2014.

National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRBs) Crimes in India Report 2022 said lightning accounted for 2,887 of the 8,060 deaths caused by forces of nature.

Data from IMD shows six per cent of the districts and four per cent of the population

are moderately to highly vulnerable to lightning strikes. Odisha ranks as the most vulnerable state.

DS Pai, a senior scientist at the India Meteorological Department (IMD), said the higher the surface temperature, the lighter the air and the higher it will rise.

"So, with higher temperatures, there is a greater chance of convective activity or thunderstorms, which naturally leads to more lightning strikes. Climate change is making such events more frequent," he told PTI.

The senior meteorologist pointed out that the large number of lightning strikes in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh that claimed several lives last week were also due to large-scale thunderstorm activity.

Former IMD chief KJ Ramesh explained that the vertical extent of clouds increases with more heating.

"Crystallisation occurs when the air temperature reaches the freezing point at the height of five to six km. The deeper the cloud, the more ice crystals and charge it contains," he said.

Ramesh said an increase of 1 degree Celsius in temperature results in a seven per cent increase in the moisture-holding capacity of the air and a 12 per cent increase in lightning strikes.

The senior meteorologist noted that while adequate warnings are being issued through the Damini mobile application, social media, and public platforms, including radio and television, a lot of work remains to be done in creating awareness among people.

During the day, when people are out in the open engaging in outdoor activities, they can clearly see the dark clouds approaching. They have enough time to seek safe shelter, such as a sturdy home, a solid building, or a hard-top vehicle with the windows rolled up, he said.

# Heavy rain likely in state till July 16: IMD



Capital city is likely to experience moderate rain or thundershowers during next 24 hours

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** The state is likely to experience heavy rainfall or thundershowers with lightning during the next three days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) predicted Saturday.

According to the weather agency, heavy rain is likely to occur at one or two places in Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Nabarangpur, Kandhamal, Gajapati, Sundargarh, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur,

places in Ganjam, Gajapati, Malkangiri, Koraput, Rayagada, Kalahandi, Kandhamal and Nabarangpur. Heavy rainfall may also occur at one or two places in Ganjam, Gajapati, Rayagada, and Kandhamal during the subsequent 24 hours," it added.

While there is no further weather warning, light to moderate rain or thundershower may continue at many places in south and north Odisha, it said.

Meanwhile, SOA's Centre for Environment and Climate (CEC) has forecast formation of a low pressure area over northwest Bay of Bengal (BoB) along the Odisha coast July 15 under the influence of an upper air cyclonic circulation which may form over the same area the previous day.

"These systems may cause moderate to heavy rainfall at many places over coastal and south Odisha with heavy to very heavy rainfall in the southern districts between July 14 and 17," a CEC bulletin said.

The low pressure system over northwest BoB may intensify into a depression July 18 and 19 and gradually move northwards before crossing north Odisha coast July 20 evening causing heavy to very heavy rainfall in north, western and coastal districts extending up to July 21, it added.

Mayurbhanj, Keonjhar, Bargarh, Balasore and Bhadrak July 14.

"The Capital city is likely to experience partly cloudy sky with possibility of moderate rain or thundershowers during next 24 hours. Puri may also see partly cloudy sky and light rain," the weather bulletin said.

"Heavy to very heavy rainfall may continue at one or two places in Ganjam, Gajapati, Kandhamal and Rayagada districts July 15. Some places in Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Jagatsinghpur, Malkangiri, Koraput, Nabarangpur, Kalahandi and Kendrapara districts are also likely to experience heavy rain," the MeT office said.

"July 16, there is a forecast for heavy rain at one or two

## Sudarsan Pattnaik bags gold at int'l championship

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New Delhi, July 13:** Renowned sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik recently won the Golden Sand Master award at an international championship in Russia.

The event - International Sand Sculpture Championship - was organised from July 4 to 12 in St Petersburg at the iconic Peter and Paul Fortress. The world's 21 master sculptors participated in the event.

"I am indeed very happy to have won the Golden Sand Master award with a gold medal at the International Sand Sculpture Championship/festival here. It is a matter of immense pride that my sand art won praise for the country," he told PTI from St Petersburg.

Pattnaik had created a 12-foot sculpture depicting a chariot and Lord Jagannath with his devotee Balaram Das, the famous Odia poet of the 14th century. "I had a dream to create a sand sculpture of Mahaprabhu Jagannath and founder of sand art Balaram Das on foreign land. So, with the blessings of Mahaprabhu I have created a sand chariot of Mahaprabhu Jagannath during this festival," he said. Meanwhile, the Indian embassy in Moscow congratulated Pattnaik on the achievement.

Pattnaik, a Padma Shri awardee, has participated in more than 65 international sand art championships and festivals around the world.

## TALK ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AT SALIA SAHI



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** As many as 60 people from the Salia Sahi, local leaders, leaders from peace committees and Sahi committees participated in a 'Police-Public Interface', organised by Society for Nature, Education and Health (SNEH) at Conflict Resolution Counseling and Training Centre in Salia Sahi here, recently.

The objective of the interface was to promote restorative justice process as a mean to settle disputes and conflicts, and promote unity in the community.

Superintendent of Excise, Bhubaneswar Sumati Tripathy, while inaugurating the event, said, "Law enforcement agencies have recognised the im-

portance of community services which is capable of enhancing community engagement and streamline operations, making it a powerful tool in policy level."

"In an ever-evolving society, interplay between the police personnel, media and public takes centre stage and shapes the dynamics of public safety and community well-being," said SNEH president Subarna Ghosh.

Senior journalist Sudarshan Chottray spoke about the role of media in shaping public-police relation and emphasised on the positive and negative aspects of restorative justice on community engagement.

The programme ended with a discussion on recent changes brought in the legal system with introduction of community service as an effective punishment under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

SNEH is a voluntary organisation, which works in the field of peace building and conflict resolution.

## ECOR's drive to keep trains, stations clean



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** In an effort to combat littering and promote responsible waste disposal, East Coast Railway (ECOR) has launched an initiative to educate passengers about proper disposal of waste, and ensure effective waste management practices, both on trains and at railway stations.

According to ECOR, licensee staff onboard trains are tasked with collecting catering waste from passengers after every meal. Also railways have set up systems at the stations for garbage collection, facilitating the orderly disposal of waste.

"Strict actions are being taken against licensee staff found improperly disposing of garbage on railway tracks. This measure underscores ECOR's commitment in maintaining environmental integrity and safety along its railway lines," ECOR official said.

"Efforts are also underway to regularly clean coaches during journeys, with particular attention given to areas such as floors, food trays, and toilets to uphold cleanliness standards," the official said.

ECOR urged passengers to cooperate by utilising the designated dustbins, assisting licensee staff in waste disposal efforts, and adhering to cleanliness guidelines throughout their journey.

## ICAR-CIFA holds National Fish Farmers' Day in City

ICAR DG inaugurates smart pond, lays foundation for genome editing facility in fish

ARINDAM GANGULY, OP

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture (CIFA) observed National Fish Farmers' Day here, Saturday.

ICAR director general and department of Agricultural Research and Education secretary Himanshu Pathak laid the foundation stone for the Genome Editing Facility on this occasion.

The initiative will help in the development of new breed of Rohu, with increased skeletal muscle growth and disease resistance, an official said.

Besides, Pathak also inaugurated 'Smart Pond', an intensive fish culture with a production target of 20 tonne per hectare per year. The Smart Pond contains a range of gadgets like mechanical fish harvester, CIFA-Smart pond feeder and sensor based aeration system.

Pathak also inaugurated the Catfish recirculating aquaculture system which can produce 40kg fish seeds per cubic meter, Koi Carp breeding facility and launched the geospatial decision support system CIFA Aqua Nirnay.



Over 200 farmers including women and entrepreneurs from the state and different parts of the country participated in the programme

Among others, ICAR deputy director generals of Fisheries Science Joykrushna Jena, and Agricultural Education Rakesh Chandra Agrawal attended as guests of honour.

Jena stressed on further research for simplification of breeding in fish. He emphasised on quality production for maintaining export quality and safety standards.

Agrawal appreciated the ideas and technologies being developed under ICAR-Network Programme on Precision Agriculture (ICAR-NePPA).

Over 200 farmers, including many farm women, entrepreneurs, and government officials from the state and different parts of the country participated in the

programme.

An exhibition-cum-kisan mela was also organised on the occasion. Fourteen fish farmers and entrepreneurs from different parts of the country were felicitated for their contributions in adopting and promoting ICAR-CIFA technologies nationwide.

New NePPA website and NePPA products of ICAR-IIWM were also released on this occasion.

At the end, Pathak appreciated the institute for the service and exhorted the scientists to develop customised technology packages for fish farmers. He stressed on adopting AI technology to accomplish smart aqua farming.

## Mars meteorites reveal facts about red planet's interior

Of the more than 74,000 known meteorites - rocks that fall to Earth from asteroids or planets colliding together - only 385 or so stones came from the planet Mars.

It's not that hard for scientists to work out that these meteorites come from Mars. Various landers and rovers have been exploring Mars' surface for decades.

Some of the early missions - the Viking landers - had the equipment to measure the composition of the planet's atmosphere. Scientists have shown that one can see this unique Martian atmospheric composition reflected in some of these meteorites.

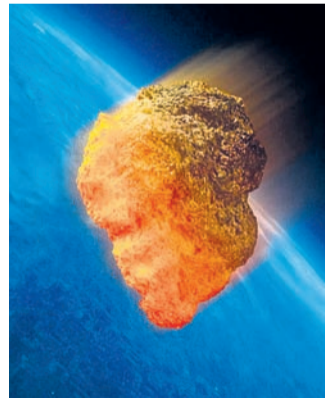
Mars also has unique oxygen. Everything on Earth, including humans and the air we breathe, is made up of a specific composition of the three isotopes of the element oxygen: oxygen-16, oxygen-17 and oxygen-18. But

Mars has an entirely different composition - it's like a geochemical fingerprint for being Martian.

The Martian meteorites found on Earth give geologists hints about the makeup of the red planet and its history of volcanic activity. They allow us to study Mars without sending a spacecraft 140 million miles away.

A planet of paradoxes. The Martian meteorites formed from once red-hot magma within Mars. Once these volcanic rocks cooled and crystallized, radioactive elements within them started to decay, acting as a radiometric clock that enables scientists to tell when they were formed.

From these radiometric ages, we know that some Martian meteorites are as little as 175 million years old, which is - geologically speaking - quite young. Conversely, some of the Martian meteorites are older, and formed



close to the time Mars itself formed.

The rocks also preserve chemical information that indicates some of the major events on Mars happened early in its history. Mars formed quite rapidly, 4.5 billion years ago, from gas and dust that made up the early solar system. Then, very soon after formation, its interior separated out into a metallic core and a

solid rocky mantle and crust.

Martian volcano remnants. Understanding how Mars underwent such an early and violent adolescence, yet still may remain volcanically active today, is an area of great interest to scientists.

The rather exotically named nakhlite and chassignite meteorites are a group of rocks from Mars that erupted from the same volcanic system some 1.3 billion years ago.

Nakhlites are basaltic rocks, similar to lavas found in Iceland or Hawaii, with beautiful large crystals of a mineral known as clinopyroxene. Chassignites are rocks made almost entirely of the green mineral olivine.

Along with the much more common shergottites, which are also basaltic rocks, and a few other more exotic Martian meteorite types, these categories of meteorite constitute all the rocks researchers possess from the red

planet. When studied together, nakhlites and chassignites tell researchers several things about Mars. The molten rock that formed them oozed to the surface and eventually cooled and crystallized, some surrounding older rocks melted into them.

That older rock doesn't exist in geologists' meteorite collection, so they had to tease out its composition from the chemical information obtained from nakhlites.

Scientists learned that the older rock was basaltic in composition and chemically distinct from other Martian meteorites. They found that it had been chemically weathered by exposure to water and brine.

It is believed that the magmas that made nakhlites and chassignites come from a distinct portion of Mars' mantle. The mantle is the rocky portion between Mars' crust and metallic core.

THE CONVERSATION

## Nandankanan gets 18 animals from Ranchi

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Barang, July 13:** As a part of an animal exchange programme, Nandankanan Zoological Park (NZP) received 18 animals from Ranchi. The exchange was carried out between Bhagwan Birsa Biological Park in Ranchi and NZP with the permission from Central Zoo Authority, Saturday.

One female white tiger, four mouse-deer, four Asian palm civet, two Indian fox, two grey pelican, 20 black-crowned night heron and 20 black-headed Ibis were taken to Ranchi. In exchange, NZP got a total of 18 animals including one female melanistic tiger, one female tiger, three male and one female striped hyena, five male and five female Indian porcupine and two male nilgai.

After reaching, animals went through primary health check-up and later kept in quarantine near Gate No-10 under supervision of veterinary doctors.

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# Baripada Kargil war hero to be honoured

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, July 13:** The nation remembers the sacrifices of 527 brave soldiers on the occasion of 25th anniversary of the Kargil war. With the Indian Air Force all set to celebrate the silver jubilee July 16, retired flight lieutenant Ajay Kumar Bhanja from Baripada in Mayurbhanj district will be honoured with gallantry award in Delhi on this occasion. Bhanja has been invited to the Kargil Day silver jubilee celebrations at Sarsawa in New Delhi.



Bhanja joined the Indian Air Force in January 1964. He served as the Chief Engineer of the Indian Air Force's advanced aircraft Mirage-2000 which played a crucial role in winning the Kargil war. He was stationed at the Gwalior Air Base. As many as 24 Mirage-2000 fighter jets and many junior engineers were operating under his supervision. The aircraft delivered all kinds of equipment and flew

soldiers to the Tiger Hill. This operation lasted for 40 hours, Bhanja revealed. He also mentioned that many dignitaries including the Defense Minister will attend the celebration. Before the Kargil war, he has also participated in the 1971 India-Pakistan war and the 1975 Pakistan war. For his contributions, Bhanja has been awarded multiple times.

# NutriFest, The Kids Fitness Show today

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, July 13:** 'NutriFest, The Kids Fitness Show' is all set to be held Sunday at the Plutone Mall here. This programme is being organised jointly by the Nutrishilp and Rotary Club of Rourkela.

Chairperson Manmin Kaur said over 299 participants have registered for the programme. There are three categories: pre (below seven years), junior (eight-12 years) and senior (13-17 years of age). The activities include painting, creative writing and storytelling. Participating fee per participant is ₹300. In second category, there are events like nutri-quiz and Spelling Bee and the entry fee in this category is ₹400. In the third category, there is a kids' fashion show and the entry fee is ₹500.

Leading Odia daily Dharitri and English daily OrissaPOST are the media partners of the event. Besides, many other private organisations are sponsoring the programme, Kaur informed. The event will begin at 12noon and will continue till 8pm.



**SOWING SEASON:** With the onset of monsoon, farmers sow paddy seeds during rain under Maneswar block in Sambalpur, Saturday

OP PHOTO

# Vijay Chand new head of NTPC Talcher Thermal

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Bhubaneswar, July 13:** Vijay Chand has taken charge as the new Head of Project at NTPC Talcher Thermal, effective July 10, 2024. With a distinguished career spanning over three decades, Chand brings extensive experience and expertise in the power sector to his new role.

A Mechanical Engineering graduate, Chand began his remarkable journey with NTPC as an Executive Trainee in 1989. Over the years, he has held several key positions across various NTPC locations, including Kahalgaon, Badarpur, Meja, Darlipalli, and the EOC in Noida. His leadership and dedication have been exemplary in every role he has undertaken.

Before his current appointment, Chand served as the Head of Project at NTPC Badarpur. In his new role at NTPC Talcher Thermal, he will be responsible for overseeing all activities and coordinating efforts with the ongoing project work of Stage-III units of 1320 MW at Talcher Thermal in Odisha.



Talcher Thermal is confident that under Chand's leadership, the project will continue to achieve new heights of success and contribute significantly to the power sector. His vision and expertise are expected to drive growth, innovation, and operational excellence, reinforcing NTPC's commitment to powering India's progress.

# Scanty rainfall hits Bhadrak farmers



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Tihidi, July 13:** Tihidi, July 13: Even one month after the onset of monsoon in the state, Kharif farming activities in this block of Bhadrak district are yet to begin, primarily because of inadequate rainfall.

Additionally, the Dasamauja Canal, the only alternative irrigation source, has dried up. As a result, paddy fields in the block look parched with cracked soil, while the plants have turned yellow.

Even as the present crisis has caused despair among the farmers, it is feared that the situation will become worse if it does not rain significantly in the coming weeks.

Paddy is cultivated on around

20,000 hectares in the block. However, due to unfavourable weather conditions before Raja Sankranti, farmers were unable to prepare the fields. They could prepare the fields only after Sankranti. Some farmers even managed to prepare fallow fields for planting rice. It is learnt that around 4,000 hectares of land in various panchayats of the block have been prepared for paddy cultivation.

This year, farmers have sowed improved varieties of rice seeds which they purchased at Rs 750-1,000 for 20 kg pack. However, due to sporadic rainfall and intense heat, water is quickly evaporating from the soil, causing the fields to crack and the rice plants to turn yellow. Importantly, the farmers are

Additionally, Dasamauja Canal, the only alternative irrigation source, has dried up. As a result, paddy fields in the block look parched with cracked soil

staring at a situation when they will have to irrigate the land by shelling out extra money if it does not rain sufficiently in the coming days. This is because it will be difficult to pull the paddy seedlings from moderately wet fields for transplanting.

The present situation has also raised concerns about a significant dip in rice production this year.

It is unfortunate that at this critical juncture water is not being released into the Dasamauja Canal to irrigate the fields, said farmers. They have urged the concerned authorities to pay attention to the pressing issue and do the needful at the earliest.

Meanwhile, Block Agriculture Officer Raghunath Pati said that the adverse condition from the beginning of the farming season has disappointed the farmers. "If there is no significant rainfall in the coming weeks, it will lead to a situation where paddy cultivation will be affected and rice production hindered," he said.

# MLA concerned over food quality at Aahaar centre

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Chhatrapur, July 13:** People alleged distribution of sub-standard food at the Aahaar centre near the Chhatrapur Hospital here in Ganjam district during the recent visit of the newly elected MLA.

The newly elected MLA Krushna Chandra Nayak visited the Aahaar centre Wednesday and ate the subsidised food with people present there.

Nayak talked to them and sought to know about the taste and quality of the food. Nayak expressed concern after getting to know about distribution of poor quality food to the people.

Sources said the former state government had opened these Aahaar centres to provide food at subsidised rate of ₹5 to poor people from villages visiting Chhatrapur hospital or the district headquarters town for various reasons. However, people alleged before him that they are being given very poor quality food which is not worth consuming. They further alleged that both rice and dal are of poor quality.

Nayak said that the state government has sanctioned ₹32 per person for the food which is being distributed to them at ₹5.

He sought to know from the executive officer of Chhatrapur Notified Area Council (NAC) as to why the food being distributed to people is of poor quality and why the administration is not looking into the problem. He asked the EO to look into the problem and distribute good quality food to people.

# Elephant carcass found; electrocution suspected



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Baripada, July 13:** The carcass of a female elephant was found in Rasagobindapur forest range in Mayurbhanj district Saturday morning. Forest officials suspect that the elephant died from electrocution.

Sources said locals found the pachyderm lying dead on the backyard of a villager's house in the wee hours of Saturday and informed the forest officials.

Informed, Forest officials rushed to the spot and seized the jumbo carcass for autopsy. An investigation has also been launched by the Forest department to ascertain the circumstances that led to the death of the animal.

According to Forest officials, the jumbo had been separated from a nine-member herd from

From preliminary examination, it seems that the animal might have died after coming in contact with live wire

Similar forest. Later the jumbo was seen moving near Nakichua section under Rasagobindapur range.

Rasgobindapur range officer Ghanashyam Singh said that the elephant is about five-six years old. From preliminary examination, it seems that the animal might have died after coming in contact with live wire. However, the exact reason behind the death will be ascertained after investigation, he added.

# Capacity building programme for OSRTC underway at NITR

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Rourkela, July 13:** A six-day residential capacity building training programme for OSRTC (Odisha State Road Transport Corporation) professionals by the Mechanical Engineering department of NIT Rourkela is underway here. The programme started July 10 and will conclude July 15.

Phase I of the programme meant for OSRTC engineers and officials was held here June 24. Phase II is designed for OSRTC Depot Managers.

The program began June 10 with an inaugural session. Bukke Kiran Naik, the course coordinator, welcomed all 31 participants and highlighted that the capacity-building course will feature a diverse curriculum designed to enhance expertise in vehicle management, depot operations, transport policies, and sustainable transportation practices. Additionally, the course will cover bus air conditioning installation and the maintenance of CCTV cameras in bus depots etc.

In his inaugural address, SK Pratihar (Dean of Sponsored Research, Industrial Consultancy, and Continuing Education) highlighted that the course's comprehensive curriculum will en-

hance OSRTC professionals' skills in modern transportation systems, promoting efficiency and environmental responsibility.

Addressing the participants, SK Patel, Head of the Mechanical Engineering department said the feedback from Phase I participants was highly satisfactory. Laxmikanta Sethy, Additional Secretary (OSRTC), Bhubaneswar, said, "This course has been instrumental in guiding and shaping our OSRTC professionals, helping them to take ownership and accountability in their work."

K Umamaheswar Rao, Director, NIT Rourkela also attended the inaugural event. S Murgan, the course coordinator, detailed the 6-day course schedule and concluded the event with a vote of thanks.



# Miscreants open fire, loot gold jewellery from couple



POST NEWS NETWORK

**Keonjhar, July 13:** Miscreants opened fire in broad daylight and looted gold jewellery from a couple in Keonjhar district Saturday. The incident took place in Belabahal bypass road of NH-20 under Ghasipura police station limits in this district.

The victims have been identified as Dilip Barik and his wife Savita Barik from Jalanda village under Korei police limits in Jajpur district. Informed, police have kicked off an investigation. They have sealed all the escape routes and are conducting search operations in nearby areas.

As per reports, Barik went to Mallipasi village under Ghatagaon police station limits on a bike with his wife and their daughter. They were returning Saturday after attending a marriage party, when three miscreants on a bike chased and detained them near Belabahal bypass.

The miscreants took out a gun and fired three rounds in order to frighten them before snatching Savita's gold ornaments. They fled away from the spot when locals reached there after hearing the gun shots. However, the couple and their daughter were unhurt.

Police reached the spot and

started an investigation into the incident. Three bullet shells were found near the spot.

Tension ensued in the area after people gathered. With a surge in such incidents in Keonjhar district, people have demand to arrest the looters and recover the loot ornaments immediately.

Ghasipura police station IIC, Sunil Kar said, "After getting information a police team rushed to catch the miscreants. An investigation has been initiated." The accused will be arrested soon, he added.

In a similar incident, miscreants opened fire to frighten a couple going on a scooty and looted gold ornaments from them on the National Highway-20 near Biragobindapur under Ghasipura police station limits March 30, 2024.

The victims, who were fortunately unhurt, were identified as Nigam Prasad Sahu of Dhenkikote and his wife. On 7 January, 2024 unknown miscreants looted gold and silver ornaments at gunpoint from a jewellery shop's owner, when he was returning from the shop to his residence at Tangarpada village under Patana police station.

# Sexagenarian drowns

POST NEWS NETWORK

**Nilagiri, July 13:** In a tragic incident, an elderly man drowned in Sone river under this police limits in Balasore district in the wee hours of Saturday.

The deceased has been identified as Gadadhar Pradhan, 64, a resident of Pundala village under Radhakishorepur panchayat.

According to reports, Gadadhar had gone to his farmland near the village early Saturday morning. Later, after answering the call of nature there, he went to nearby Sone river to clean up. However, he slipped into the deep water. His family members after a frantic search rescued him from the river and rushed him to Nilagiri hospital, where the doctor declared him dead on arrival.

A case of unnatural death was registered at Ajothya police outpost. Police handed over the body to his family members after post-mortem.

EAST COAST RAILWAY	
Tender No.:	92245623
Dtd.:	05.07.2024
Name of Work: SUPPLY OF SET OF FLEXIBLE HOSE AS PER ANNEXURE-1 FOR LHB COACHES.	
Estimated Value:	₹ 36,34,400/-
EMD:	₹ 72,890/-, QTY: 200 SETS
Tender closing Date & Time : At 1500 hrs. on 29.07.2024	
The Tender documents complete details available at <a href="http://www.irps.gov.in">www.irps.gov.in</a>	
Dy. Chief Materials Manager Bhubaneswar	
PR-302/PP/24-25	

EAST COAST RAILWAY	
E-AUCTION OF PARKING STANDS	
Station & Location : (1) Naranpur-2 Wheeler (Near station building), (2) Badabandha-2 Wheeler (near Platform-1), (3) Nirakarpur-MIX-2-cum-4 Wheeler (near circulating area).	
Auction Start Date & Time : 23.07.2024 at 1100 hrs. (for all Sl. Nos.)	
Auction End Date & Time : 23.07.2024 at 1130 hrs. (for sl. no. 1), at 1140 hrs. (for sl. no. 2) and at 1150 hrs. (for sl. no. 3).	
Note: Prospective bidders are advised to visit the <a href="http://www.irps.gov.in">www.irps.gov.in</a> and check the upcoming e-auctions leasing tab to get all required information regarding this e-auction.	
Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager/PR-304/PP/24-25	

PUBLIC NOTICE	
Notice is hereby given by to all concerned that, Babita Sahoo, W/o - Sarat Kumar Sahoo, now residing in rented house of Achutananda Sahoo, At - Fakirpur, P.O./P.S. - Jagatpur, Cuttack has lost the Original Regd. Sale Deed No. 10432304780, Dt. 12.10.2023 which executed by Pratap Kumar Dash in favour of Subhanjali Devi and original mutation Khata No. 620/3055, Plot No. 466/4494 and original sale deed 10431400037 dt. 04.01.2014 which executed by Babita Nayak in favour of Pratap Kumar Dash and Original Mutation of Khata No. 520/2870, Plot No. 466/4494 under Mouza - Tarai for which he has lodged a F.I.R. on 09.06.2024 before the I.C. Jagatpur Police Station, Cuttack. However Babita Sahoo has applied for a housing loan before the LIC Housing Finance Ltd., Link Road, Cuttack by offering mortgage of the aforesaid property title documents.	
Therefore, all concerned having any claim over the aforesaid purchased property under Regd. Sale Deed No. 10432304780, Dt. 12.10.2023 and R.O.R. (PATA) relating to Plot No. 446/4494, Khata No. 620/3055 and Sale deed No. 10431400037 dt. 04.01.2014 and R.O.R. (Patta) relating to Plot No. 446/4494, Khata No. 620/2870 are required to file any claim with the undersigned within 15 (Fifteen Days) from the date of publication of this notice, failing which it will be presumed that the property having link with the said documents is free from encumbrances and any claim against the applicant/mortgagor and the company as the mortgagee shall be void and ineffective after the lapse of 15 days of publication of this notice.	
Pravata Kumar Rout (Advocate) L.I.C. Housing Finance Ltd., Cuttack Branch Link Road, Cuttack, Mob.: 9861515731	
Cuttack Dt. 13.07.2024	

The happiness you give makes you happier than the happiness you receive.

THE MOTHER



# Freedom of Religion

Do Indians have freedom of religion? Meaning do they have right to invite others into their faith and the right to easily leave their faith? The Constitution says yes, but the laws say no. India is an unusual nation where propagation is both a fundamental right and a criminal offence. A fundamental right is defined as one that enjoys a high level of protection from encroachment by the State. But Article 25 (the right to freely profess and propagate religion) doesn't enjoy such protection in India.

In effect, the Constitution tells us we are free to propagate but when we do so the police shows up and takes us away. On 11 July this year, it was reported that the Allahabad High Court rejected the bail of a man named Shrinivas Rav Nayak with the observation that "the Constitution confers on each individual the fundamental right to profess, practice and propagate his religion. However, the individual right to freedom of conscience and religion cannot be extended to construe a collective right to proselytize."

In the sub-continent, Nepal does not allow conversions, while Pakistan has the same phrasing as India does, with the same restrictions. There is no real freedom of religion in Pakistan on this specific issue, just as the honest observer will conclude there isn't in India. But this is not what was intended by those who wrote the Constitution. The Constituent Assembly debate on religious freedom happened on 6 December 1948. It came after meetings of the Minorities Committee and the Committee on Fundamental Rights, which discussed the issue in detail and produced a text which is today Article 25. It reads: "Right to freedom of religion: Subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of this Part, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion."



Aakar Patel

India is an unusual nation where propagation is both a fundamental right and a criminal offence

The key word here is propagate, which the dictionary defines as to spread and promote, and to breed. The context in which the word was debated by India's Constituent Assembly was that of conversions, specifically by Christians. Gujarat's KM Munshi, the Hindu conservative, was part of the group that arrived at the text and he said of the word 'propagate' that: "I know it was on this word that the Christian community laid the greatest emphasis, not because they wanted to convert people aggressively, but because the word 'propagate' was a fundamental part of their tenet." And "so long as religion is religion, conversion by free exercise of conscience had to be recognised." People must not fear the idea of a right to propagate, Munshi said, because "whatever conversions take place ... are only the result of persuasion and not because of material advantages." Note that conversion was always accepted as the reason for propagation.

In the Interim Report on Fundamental Rights dated 1 May 1947, Frank Anthony had spoken to the committee and said: "My community (he was an Anglo-Indian) does not propagate. We do not convert, nor are we converted. But I do appreciate how deeply, how passionately millions of Christians feel on this right to propagate their religion." Anthony, the founder of a school network around India, congratulated the majority for retaining "in spite of its contentious character" the words "to propagate," "a right which is regarded as perhaps the most fundamental of Christian rights."

TT Krishnamachari said that Dalits became Christian because of the status it gave them, that Hindu reform would deter such conversions, and that the right to propagate also applied to Hindus and Arya Samajists who were free under the wording of this law to carry out their conversion activities, which they called "shuddhi."

The point here is that the meaning of the word "propagate" was understood by all as the right to, in Munshi's words, "persuade people to join their faith." That is, to convert. But what would happen instead in India as we see around us is that the State would step in to not only remove the right to propagate but also the right of the individual to change her religion. The only opposition in the Constituent Assembly came from a twenty-six year old man from Odisha, who wanted the word propagate removed. This was Loknath Misra, brother of Rangnath Misra who would later become Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, and uncle of Dipak Misra, also to become Chief Justice. Loknath Misra said he didn't have a problem with propagation. "If people should propagate their religion, let them do so," but "only I crave, let not the Constitution put it as a fundamental right and encourage it." His opposition also came from an understanding of the right to propagate as meaning the right to convert.

VP Bharatiya, writing in the Journal of Indian Law Institute ('Propagation of religion: Stanislaus Vs State of MP', Vol. 19, No. 3, July-Sept 1977), says the specificity in the debates gave the impression that the inclusion of the word propagate "creates a specific fundamental right to convert."

Dr BR Ambedkar was present in the debate but did not speak. He said he had nothing to add to what the others had said in defence of the right to propagate. It should be noted that Ambedkar's original draft submitted to the Constituent Assembly's committees bore the words: "right to profess, to preach and to convert, within limits compatible with public order and morality." He was satisfied that propagate meant the same thing. He would himself leave Hinduism and convert to Buddhism together with more than 3 lakh other Dalits in Nagpur on 14 October 1956.

Beginning in the 1970s, India's judiciary and police began instituting a series of practices that have resulted in where we are today: a nation whose Constitution gives citizens freedom of religion but whose establishment disallows it through indiscriminate use of criminal law.



Malay Mishra

RUSSIA BEING FIRMLY GROUNDED IN THE CHINESE WORLD ORDER WOULD NOT BE INCLINED TO HEED TO INDIA'S PEACE TALKS

PM Modi's attendance as an observer at the G7 meet in Apulia, Italy, soon after his taking office of PM (13-14 June), where the Ukraine conflict was largely on the agenda, came as a sharp contrast to his two-day visit to Moscow on 8-9 July, where he talked about peace and remarked that the solution to the Ukraine conflict was not on the battlefield. He hugged the Russian President soon after Russia bombed the largest children's hospital in Kyiv with scores of cancer-ridden children buried under the debris of missiles.

In continuation of India's "muscular" foreign policy, Modi 3.0 would keep balancing between both power blocs to draw maximum mileage from either side in the framework of pursuing an independent foreign policy under the rubric of "strategic autonomy." This policy, however, runs the risk of antagonising its Western partners in the long run. This was evident at the Summit with cold vibes between the leaders of India and the US though Modi held separate bilateral meetings with all other members barring Canada, while his assurance to Ukrainian President Zelenskyy to mediate with Russia for peace held no salience.

Besides, the national security issue, which has bedeviled India's relations with the Five Eyes intel group of countries over the alleged attempt at eliminating Khalistani "terrorist" and leader of the banned "Sikhs for Justice," Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, on US soil, has turned to be a millstone hindering smoother bilateral relations with the countries in question. India's subsequent cold shouldering the Ukraine peace Summit (represented by a Secretary of the MEA), added to Modi's conspicuous absence from the SCO Summit in Astana (4-5 July) represented by the Foreign Minister, has added further fodder to the Western perception of India drifting closer

## FOCUS DIPLOMACY

# EXTERNAL OPTICS



Indian foreign policy, with its independent posturing and playing up to both sides of the geo-strategic muddle, calls for more strident statesmanship if the country has to truly emerge as a global player in its own right

to the Russian orbit where China looms large. There could be two surmises for the PM's absence, one to avoid a direct confrontation with Pakistan and China, both members of SCO, with whom India's relations are the most turbulent on account of recurring terrorist violence and the border problem respectively, though SCO could have been a better platform to air India's strident tone against cross-border terrorism at highest level. The second factor could be India's indifference to attend a gathering largely driven by China when the Chinese President had opted out of the G20 Summit under India's Presidency in September last year. Jaishankar, however, in his bilateral meeting with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi raised the border issue at length and called upon the Chinese side to resolve the situation at the earliest in keeping with the border agreements signed to maintain "Peace and Tranquility" on the border.

The Indian side has been taking the long-standing dispute, since the clashes at Galwan in May-June 2020 and the subsequent salami slicing of Indian territory and building and fortify-

ing the border areas by China, as a border issue while for Beijing it is ideological. China has consistently refused to agree to the demarcation of the border (McMahon line) during the British rule under the specious plea of not negotiating with Tibet being the third party who they were to subsequently absorb as part of their expansionist scheme. China thus is in no urgency to negotiate the border issue as its bilateral trade with India is flourishing with a billion dollar plus trade surplus, while its navy and nuclear strength has been exponentially growing for which India is no match. Besides, Beijing has been rapidly reorganising its war-force strategy with cyber, space and AI prowess.

The recent visit of Modi to Russia has come in for harsh attack from the US. US Ambassador in New Delhi Eric Garcetti, addressing a conclave on India-US defence and security relations put it bluntly, "There is no such thing as strategic autonomy during conflict," alluding to India's consistently neutral position on the Russia-Ukraine war, exemplified by yet another abstention in a recent UNGA resolution moved by Ukraine and a few European countries calling for a cessation

of hostilities and for Russia to vacate the Zaporizhia nuclear plant for fear of nuclear contamination. The resolution passed with 99 member countries voting in favour with India abstaining as one among 60 members.

India's diplomatic acumen in holding on to a balance of power with talks of peace and no war finds a faint resemblance to the 19th century Austrian diplomat Metternich's efforts at brokering a balance of power for 30 years of peace and prosperity until the First World War broke out. Modi's statement of "this is not the era of war" to the Austrian Chancellor soon after his hugging Putin may have sounded anachronistic to Western ears. Recall Metternich's words, "The events which cannot be prevented, must be directed." But then, Indian foreign policy with its independent posturing and playing up to both sides of the geo-strategic muddle, calls for more strident statesmanship if India has to truly emerge as a global player in its own right. Except for getting Putin's assurance to release the Indian conscripts drafted by the Russian army into the Ukraine war, and assurance of steady supplies of spares, parts and munitions to India and trading in local currencies to circumvent Western sanctions, nothing much substantive came out of the Summit. Russia being firmly grounded in the Chinese world order would not be inclined to heed to India's peace talks even though the Chinese President during his recent meeting with the Hungarian PM called on world powers to take all possible measures to end the war. With the Israel-Palestine war still ongoing, the present times call for firm leadership, unity of views and a balanced outlook to foster real peace, and not empty talks, not anymore.

The writer is a retired diplomat. Views expressed are personal.

## SPECTRUM POLICY

# Inequality spurs democratic backsliding

With November's election in the US fast approaching, Democrats continue to debate whether to campaign on the economy or the future of democracy. In fact, our research at the Chicago Center on Democracy shows that the two issues are closely connected: high levels of income inequality increase the risk of a democracy sliding into autocracy.

The US is highly unequal, by international standards, and that inequality is partly to blame for the erosion of its democracy. If Democrats can wrest the mantle of economic anti-elitism away from Donald Trump and continue to improve the lives of low- and middle-income Americans, they could help pull the country back from the brink of authoritarianism.

About two dozen countries around the world are experiencing different forms of democratic erosion or backsliding. Most commonly, elected presidents and prime ministers aggrandize their own powers by attacking the press and judiciary, impugning public servants and civil-society groups, and undermining confidence in elections when they lose.

Our global analysis of democracies reveals a startling regu-

larity: the more unequal a society, both in terms of income and wealth, the greater the risk of democratic backsliding. National income has a smaller effect, while a democracy's age and the strength of its public institutions have no discernible influence. Inequality is the key factor.

For example, Sweden, which is more equal than 87% of democracies, had about a 4% risk of democratic erosion in 2017. On the other end of the spectrum, South Africa, the world's most unequal democracy, had a risk of around 30%. As for the US, which remains more unequal than 60% of all democracies, the risk was 9%, more than double that of Sweden.

To understand how economic inequality erodes democracy requires a closer look at the differences between the US and Sweden. Most notably, both countries have a prominent right-wing nationalist party. The Sweden Democrats—the Swedish equivalent of the MAGA-dominated Republican Party in the US—have gained support by opposing the country's relative openness to immigration over the past two decades. They now play an important role in the center-right governing coalition after finishing second in the 2022 parlia-

mentary election, ahead of traditional conservative parties.

Despite this, Sweden is not displaying the symptoms of democratic erosion that are becoming increasingly pronounced in the US. Politicians do not call the press the "enemies of the people," attack judges and prosecutors, threaten to purge the civil service, or question the integrity of elections.

Presumably such behaviour would not resonate widely with the Swedish public, because, in a country with a relatively small gap between rich and poor, confidence in public institutions remains comparatively high. Swedes across the board have benefited from the country's generous welfare state, which the Sweden Democrats have buttressed by pushing for increased social spending in areas like public health and education. Overall, Europe's nationalist right tends to be more supportive of social policy than legacy conservative parties. What is strange about America's would-be autocrat is that his populism is so half-hearted (as well as half-baked). While Trump discourages fellow Republicans from cutting Social Security and Medicare, his messaging on the issue has

been inconsistent, and he never misses a chance to call for repeal of the Affordable Care Act.

Worse still, a second Trump administration would only widen income and wealth gaps in the US. As president, Trump passed highly regressive tax cuts and has promised to extend them should he return to the White House. He even floated the idea of eliminating the income tax altogether and replacing it with tariffs on imports.

A demagogue, Trump uses anti-elitist rhetoric to solidify his base and, with that fervent support, would feel emboldened to undermine democracy and exacerbate inequality during a second term. Since efforts to subvert democratic systems are more likely to succeed in unequal societies, the US and other countries can strengthen democracy by fostering a fairer economy. That means the Democrats don't have to choose between campaigning on economic growth and equity, on one hand, and the future of democracy, on the other. They are the same fight.

The writer is Faculty Director of the Chicago Center on Democracy. ©PROJECT SYNDICATE

## WISDOM CORNER

Let come what comes, let go what goes. See what remains. RAMANA MAHARSHI

A man will renounce any pleasures you like but he will not give up his suffering. GEORGE GURDIEFF

I have learned silence from the talkative, toleration from the intolerant, and kindness from the unkind; yet, strange, I am ungrateful to those teachers. KAHLIL GIBRAN

## THIS DAY IN HISTORY

1958: Coup in Iraq. Abd al-Karim Qasim, a brigadier in the Iraqi Army staged a military coup in Iraq, overthrowing the Hashemite monarchy. The Iraqi King Faisal II, the Crown Prince Abd al-Ilah, and Prime Minister Nuri al-Said were assassinated during the coup. Qasim took over the position of Prime Minister, which he held until 1963. The coup also led to the dissolution of the Arab Federation of Jordan and Iraq.

1960: British ethnologist Jane Goodall first arrived at what became Gombe Stream National Park in Tanzania; there she conducted her groundbreaking research on chimpanzees.

1965: Mars flyby of Mariner 4. The American spacecraft became the first to take pictures of another planet and send them back to Earth.

# Letters

## TO THE EDITOR

Readers of Orissa POST are most welcome to contribute letters (200 words), articles and columns (between 750-1250 words). Contributors are requested to send their contact numbers and full postal address/email ID. They may also send in their valuable comments, opinion and suggestions, preferably by email, to: edit@orissapost.com

Orissa POST  
B-15, Rasulgarh Industrial Estate, Bhubaneswar-751010

## In bad taste

Sir, This refers to "June 25 Samvidhaan Hatya Diwas: Centre" (Orissa POST, July 13). I think, the BJP-led NDA government instead of proving its good governance remains busy with a matter which is now a spent force. The term "Hatya Diwas" is in bad taste. Had its intention been good the BJP would have observed the day as "Save Democracy." People believe that democracy is in danger as the Opposition parties are being harassed by the probe agencies allegedly at the whims and fancies of the ruling party at the Centre. A reign of terror has been let loose and democracy has now become a misnomer in India.

Arun Gupta, KOLKATA

## Rights reaffirmed

Sir, The recent Supreme Court ruling regarding maintenance entitlement for divorced Muslim women under Section 125 of the CrPC marks a significant development in the legal landscape of India. This ruling is rooted in a historical context where the issue of maintenance for divorced Muslim women has been a point of contention. The landmark 1985 Shah Bano case brought attention to this matter when the Supreme Court upheld a Muslim woman's right to claim maintenance from her divorced husband under Section 125 CrPC, irrespective of personal religious laws. However, the subsequent enactment of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, limited this right by providing maintenance only during the "iddat" period (the waiting period after divorce). In July 2024, the Supreme Court delivered a pivotal ruling, clarifying that divorced Muslim women are entitled to maintenance under Section 125 CrPC, regardless of their personal law. This ruling reaffirms the secular nature of Section 125, emphasising that it operates independently of any religion-specific remedies. By ensuring that divorced Muslim women have a parallel remedy under secular law, irrespective of the 1986 Act, the court has reinforced the principle of equal treatment under the law. The implications of this ruling are profound, particularly in promoting gender equality. It recognises the rights of all married and divorced women, irrespective of their religious background, and underscores that maintenance is a fundamental right not contingent upon personal religious laws.

Amarjeet Kumar, HAZARIBAGH



## BENGAL BYPOLLS Clean sweep for Trinamool

Ruling party steamrolls Opposition in Bengal Assembly bypolls, continues its LS victory streak

AGENCIES

**Kolkata, July 13:** The Trinamool Congress continued its winning streak from the recent Lok Sabha elections by sweeping the West Bengal Assembly bypolls Saturday, wresting Raiganj, Bagda, and Ranaghat Dakshin seats from the BJP and securing a record victory margin in Maniktala.

Trinamool Congress (TMC) candidates Krishna Kalyani, Madhuparna Thakur and Mukut Mani Adhikari won the Raiganj, Bagda, and Ranaghat Dakshin seats respectively, while Supti Pandey won in the Maniktala segment in Kolkata.

The bypolls in the four Assembly seats were held July 10.

The BJP secured the second position in all four seats, while the Left-Congress alliance was a distant third and also lost deposits in two Assembly segments.

In Raiganj in Uttar Dinajpur district, Kalyani won by a margin of 50,077 votes over his nearest BJP rival Manas Kumar Ghosh. Kalyani got 86,479 votes, while Ghosh bagged 36,402.

Madhuparna Thakur, daughter of TMC Rajya Sabha MP and Matua leader Mamatabala Thakur, won by a margin of 33,455 votes over her rival Binay Kumar Biswas of the BJP in the Bagda Assembly seat in North 24 Parganas district.

Madhuparna Thakur got 107,706, while Biswas secured 74,251.

Mukut Mani Adhikari of the TMC defeated BJP nominee Manoj Kumar Biswas by 39,048 votes in Ranaghat Dakshin in North 24 Parganas.

Adhikari bagged 113,533 votes, while Biswas pocketed 74,485.

With this victory, the ruling



**SHOT IN THE ARM FOR THE TMC JUST A MONTH AFTER THE PARTY'S PERFORMANCE IN THE LS POLLS WHEN IT HAD BAGGED 29 SEATS, UP FROM 22 IN 2019**

**FRESH DISAPPOINTMENT FOR THE BJP AFTER ITS DISMAL PERFORMANCE IN THE LS ELECTIONS WHEN ITS TALLY CAME DOWN TO 12 FROM 18 IN 2019**

**We thank the people for their faith in us. We will dedicate the by-election and the Lok Sabha poll victories to the martyrs on our July 21 Martyrs' Day rally**

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM AND TMC SUPREMO



party in West Bengal won the Matua community-majority Bagda and Ranaghat Dakshin after a gap of eight years.

TMC nominee Supti Pandey won by a record margin of 62,312 votes in Maniktala in Kolkata over her nearest rival Kalyan Chaubey of the BJP, who is also the All India Football Federation (AIFF) president.

Pandey, the widow of former TMC minister Sadhan Pandey, bagged 83,110 votes whereas Chaubey got 20,798 votes.

The BJP secured Ranaghat Dakshin, Bagda, and Raiganj segments in the 2021 Assembly polls.

Despite the BJP winning the three seats in 2021, the MLAs later switched to the TMC.

The three seats fell vacant after MLAs Kalyani, Adhikari,

and Biswajit Das of Bagda resigned from their posts to contest Lok Sabha polls on TMC tickets.

Kalyani, who lost to BJP's Kartik Chandra Paul in the Lok Sabha polls, was re-nominated from Raiganj in the bypolls.

Adhikari, who was defeated by BJP's Jagannath Sarkar from the Ranaghat Lok Sabha seat, was in the fray again from the Ranaghat Dakshin Assembly segment.

The Maniktala seat was won by the TMC in 2021 but became vacant after former state minister Sadhan Pandey died in February 2022.

The bypolls, just a month after the Lok Sabha polls, was a litmus test for all three political outfits, with the BJP hoping to check its electoral slide and retain the

three seats it had won last time, a goal which it failed to meet and the TMC aimed to continue its winning streak in the bypolls.

Since the 2021 Assembly polls, the TMC has won all the by-elections, except the Sagardighi bypoll in March 2023, which the Congress had won.

With this victory, the TMC's tally becomes 215 in the 294-member Assembly. It also enjoys the support of three BJP MLAs, who switched over to the ruling party but are yet to resign from the House.

The BJP's official tally in the state Assembly has come down to 71 from 77 it had won in 2021.

The Assembly segments of Haroa and Naihati in North 24 Parganas district, Sitai in Cooch Behar, Taldangra in Bankura, Madarihah in Alipurduars, and Medinipur in Paschim Medinipur are still vacant since their respective sitting MLAs contested and won the Lok Sabha polls.

Reacting to the party's performance in the bypolls, a state BJP leader said they would introspect.

"We will review the party's performance. But the TMC did not allow free and fair elections and there were a lot of irregularities. The ruling party had unleashed a reign of terror," BJP state spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said.

The TMC was quick to counter, dubbing the allegations "baseless".

"The people have rejected the BJP in the last Lok Sabha polls in Bengal and the same thing has happened in the bypolls. The allegation that by-polls were not free and fair is just excuses to hide their own failures," TMC leader Kumal Ghosh said.



Muslim women participate in 'Khuti Puja', a customary ritual before putting up 'pandals' to initiate Durga Puja festivities, in Kolkata, Friday. PTI PHOTO

## Justice Amrita Sinha to hear teachers' recruitment cases

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

**Kolkata, July 13:** Calcutta High Court's single-judge bench of Justice Amrita Sinha from now onwards will be hearing the matters related to irregularities in the recruitment of primary teachers in state-run schools of West Bengal.

To date, the same cases have been heard at the bench of Justice Rajasekhara Mantha.

Insiders from the Calcutta High Court said that since Justice Mantha has been elevated to head a division bench, the matter of primary teachers' recruitment, which was heard at his bench till date, will now be heard at the bench of Justice Sinha.

At the same time, certain cases

related to police matters will be shifted from the bench of Justice Sinha to the bench of Justice Rajarshi Bharadwaj.

As per the new 'Master of Rosters', the cases which were allotted to the bench of Justice Sinha will continue to be heard there.

However, the cases which were allotted to her bench after 2022 will now be heard at the bench of Justice Bharadwaj.

Justice Amrita Sinha is a former judge of the Calcutta High Court. She was appointed to the bench in 2019. She has been hearing cases related to recruitment of primary teachers in state-run schools of West Bengal.

## 'Kerala govt does many things not in line with law' says Guv Khan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, July 13:** The Kerala government does many things which are not in accordance with law, Governor Arif Mohammed Khan said Saturday in an apparent reference to the Left administration's reported decision to form a search committee without the Chancellor's nominee, to select the VC of APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University (KTU).

The state government had Friday reportedly constituted the five-member search-cum-selection committee to select the Vice Chancellor of KTU.



Responding to reporters' query about the development, Khan, who is Chancellor of universities in Kerala, said, "It is up to them what they want to do. They are doing many things which are not in accordance with the law."

The Governor said that ultimately, the matter will be settled by the court.

Khan and the Left administration have been at loggerheads for some time over the issue of appointments, including that of VCs, being made in universities in the state.

While the Governor has accused the government of interfering in the autonomy of the universities, the Left front has alleged that Khan was trying to implement the RSS and Sangh Parivar's agenda to safonise higher education in the state.

## ZSI scientists discover new species of dogfish shark

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kolkata, July 13:** Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) scientists have discovered a new species of dogfish shark off Kerala coast.

Various varieties of dogfish, which is a small shark, are in demand for their fins, liver oil and meat and sporadically caught as bycatch by fishermen.

The newly discovered species differs from others by the number of teeth count, trunk and head heights, fin structure and colour; the team that discovered it said in a ZSI journal.

"The new species, *Squalus hima*, was discovered from samples we collected from a fishing harbour in Kerala close to the Arabian Sea," team leader ZSI scientist

Bineesh KK of the Marine Biology Regional Centre said.

This new species is described based on 13 specimens collected from the southwest coast of India during the surveys conducted up to 1000 metres along the coastline to understand the diversity of deep-sea sharks, he said.

Taxonomic re-evaluation of the general *Squalus* in the Indo-Pacific and other regions has revealed many undescribed species that were historically lumped together under a single name, he said.

ZSI Director Dhriti Banerjee said the survey has been conducted under the 'Deep Ocean Mission' of the Ministry of Earth Sciences.



## In a first, Kerala Kalamandalam serves non-veg

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thrissur (Kerala), July 13:** For the first time in the history of the Kerala Kalamandalam, a premier public institution for the preservation and promotion of the traditional performing arts of the state, non-vegetarian dishes were served at its canteen to students July 10, on popular demand.

An official at the Deemed-to-be-University said that chicken biryani, prepared at the famous kitchen run by inmates of Viyyur Central Jail, was served to the students Wednesday.

This marked the first time since its founding in 1930 that food was served to students at the institution which was not just plant-based or dairy-based, according to the official.

Kalamandalam is a residential institution that imparts training in various performance arts, such as Kathakali, Mohiniyattam, Thullal, Kutiyattam (male and female), Panchavadyam, Carnatic music, Mridangam, etc.

The official said the decision to serve meat-based dishes was



**Chicken biryani, prepared at the famous kitchen run by inmates of Viyyur Central Jail, was served to the students of the premier institute Wednesday for the first time since its founding in 1930**

taken by the university authorities in response to the demand from students to not be restricted to plant-based food.

Initially, a mess committee comprising representatives of students, teachers, and non-teaching staff was formed, and based on student demand it was decided to serve chicken biryani July 10.

The mess committee is scheduled to meet July 20, and a decision is expected to be made on serving other meat-based dishes to the students, the official said.

The food is served free of cost, and non-vegetarian dishes could be served once or twice a month, the officer told PTI.

When asked about the re-

ported opposition from a section of faculty to including meat-based food in the canteen menu, citing concerns that it would affect the health of students who undergo oil therapies as part of their studies, the officer said that no complaints have been received so far.

Kerala Kalamandalam was founded in 1930 by renowned poet Padmabhooshan Vallathol Narayana Menon and his close associate Manakkulam Mukundaraja, under the patronage of Kakkad Karanavappad.

Initially, it was exclusively a training centre for Kathakali.

Situated on the banks of the river Bharathapuzha in Cheruthuruthy village of Thrissur district, Kerala Kalamandalam was declared a Deemed-to-be-University for Art and Culture by the Central government March 14, 2006.

As a Deemed-to-be-University, Kerala Kalamandalam currently offers graduate, post-graduate, and PhD research programmes, as well as secondary and higher secondary courses, all under one roof.

## NITI AAYOG'S INDEX

## Kerala's top rank reflects govt's commitment to welfare: Vijayan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Thiruvananthapuram, July 13:** Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan Saturday said Kerala retaining the top position in the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2023-24 was a recognition to the initiatives being taken by the LDF government for the welfare and social progress of the state.

The state had emerged top in the SDG India Index in 2020-21 with 75 points and in the latest ranking, the state retained its position with 79 points, he pointed out.

"Kerala tops India once again! With a score of 79 in @NITIAYog's latest Sustainable Development Index, Kerala remains first. This recognition reflects the Left Democratic



Front government's commitment to social progress and welfare," he posted in his 'X' handle.

It is a recognition of the initiatives being taken by the LDF

government for the welfare and social progress of the state and the support extended by the people for this, he said in a Facebook post later.

Uttarakhand and Kerala have emerged as the top performer states in NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2023-24, which evaluates the progress of states and union territories on social, economic and environmental parameters, while Bihar has been adjudged as the worst performer.

According to the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2023-24, India's overall Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) score increased to 71 in 2023-24, compared to 66 in 2020-21, supported by significant progress on eliminating poverty, providing decent work, economic growth, climate action and life on land.

## Women labourers discover treasure trove while excavating rainwater harvesting pit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**Kannur (Kerala), July 13:** At first they thought it was a bomb and kept a safe distance. They then feared it might be koodothram (black magic).

But, a group of women labourers never imagined that they would unearth a treasure trove, which they opened after gathering much courage.

This is exactly what happened when the daily wage workers dug up a rainwater harvesting pit at a private rubber plantation in Chengalayi in this district Thursday.

The container they stumbled upon was filled with precious jewels and old coins, which is considered to be of great value.

Though its value and antiquity can be ascertained only after a detailed examination by the Archaeology department, it is considered as an invaluable treasure trove by the locals.



After being informed of the discovery, police rushed to the spot and collected the treasure Thursday itself.

Later, they produced the jewels and coins before a local court. As the news made headlines Saturday, the women workers said they never ever thought that there would be priceless jewellery or coins inside the container: "We saw something glittering inside



the pit...it was an old container. We first thought that it was a bomb. Then we suspected whether it was some koodothram (black magic)," one of the women said. But, to their surprise, gold and silver coins, precious beads, pathakka (lockets) and so on came out of it, she said.

A police official, who reached the area for further inspection, Saturday said all the unearthed

articles were produced before the court. "We have already informed the Archaeology department about the discovery. It is up to them to carry out more searches in the area. Their examination will reveal the antiquity of the discovered articles," he said.

Meanwhile, three more silver coins and a gold bead were found in the same property Saturday morning, locals added.



The RBI recently published a detailed report on employment. As per the report, around eight crore new jobs were created in the last three-four years. This figure has silenced those spreading fake narrative on jobs  
NARENDRA MODI | PRIME MINISTER

## SC ADJOURNS HEARING ON BALAJI'S BAIL PLEA

The Supreme Court has adjourned to July 22 the hearing on a bail plea of former Tamil Nadu minister V Senthil Balaji, who was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case last year. A bench of Justice Abhay S Oka and Justice Augustine George Masih Friday deferred the matter due to paucity of time



## of the day quote

Several scams of this state government, one after the other, have become a topic of discussion across the country...there is negative feeling about this administration in Karnataka outside the state, after Congress came to power in the state, and it is painful  
H D KUMARASWAMY | UNION MINISTER

Our agencies are working very hard. The results are there for all to see, including Article 370 not being in the Constitution...But cyber security is all important also for terrorism  
JAGDEEP DHANKHAR | VICE PRESIDENT

When there was every possibility that Kejriwal would get relief from the Supreme Court in the ED case, the CBI made a "false case" against Kejriwal so that these people could play with his life  
SANJAY SINGH | AAP MP

# More powers for J&K LG; Oppn slams move

The opposition slammed the Union government's move and termed it a step towards "disempowering" the people of Jammu and Kashmir



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi/Srinagar, July 13: The Centre has significantly strengthened the authority of the lieutenant governor in Jammu and Kashmir, empowering him to make decisions on crucial matters such as police, and all-India services officers and granting sanctions for prosecution in various cases.

The Opposition slammed the Union government's move and termed it a step towards "disempowering" the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Union Home Ministry gave more powers to the L-G Friday by amending rules framed under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. This act, passed alongside the abrogation of Article 370, bifurcated the erstwhile state into two Union Territories -- Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

In the past, proposals concerning police, public order, all-India services and the Anti-Corruption Bureau required approval from the finance department of Jammu and Kashmir before reaching the L-G. Under the revised rules, such proposals must now be presented directly to the L-G through the chief secretary of the Union territory.

The LG's authority extends further to the appointment of the Advocate General and other law officers. These appointments,

previously decided upon by the government, will now require the L-G's approval. The Centre's decision has met with criticism from some political parties in Jammu and Kashmir, who view it as an attempt to undermine the power of an elected government.

The Supreme Court has directed the restoration of statehood in Jammu and Kashmir "at the earliest" and holding elections to the Assembly by September 30, 2024.

Various political parties expressed their disapproval of the Centre's move Saturday to grant additional powers to Jammu and Kashmir's lieutenant governor in matters concerning police and all-India service officers.

The National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP) labelled the decision as a step towards "disempowering" the people of Jammu and Kashmir while the Congress condemned the move as a "murder of democracy".

The L-G's role in bureaucratic matters has also been amplified.

Proposals for postings and transfers of administrative secretaries, along with those concerning IAS and IPS officers, will be routed through the L-G's office. Reacting to this order, NC Vice President Omar Abdullah raised concerns about the implications of having a "pow-

erless and rubber stamp" Chief Minister who would need the L-G's approval even for minor appointments.

Despite acknowledging the timing of the decision in relation to upcoming elections, Abdullah emphasised the importance of a clear commitment towards restoring full statehood of Jammu and Kashmir. "This is why a firm commitment to laying out the timeline for restoration of full and undiluted statehood for Jammu and Kashmir is a prerequisite for these polls. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir deserve better than a powerless and rubber stamp CM who will have to beg the L-G to get his/her peon appointed," the NC vice president said.

Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh remarked that the increased powers given to the Jammu and Kashmir L-G suggested a dim outlook for the restoration of a full-fledged statehood in the near future. In a post on 'X', he said, "The only meaning that can be drawn from this notification is that full-fledged statehood for Jammu and Kashmir does not seem likely in the immediate future."

He said there has been a consensus across political parties that Jammu and Kashmir must immediately become a full-fledged state of the Indian Union once again.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti's daughter and media advisor Iltija Mufti highlighted the perceived agenda behind the decision, suggesting that it aimed at limiting the powers of any future elected government in the region.

She raised concerns about the potential impact of the Union government's decision on the upcoming Assembly elections and the Centre's reluctance to relinquish control in Jammu and Kashmir.



Aam Admi Party (AAP) candidate Mohinder Bhagat after winning by-poll from Jalandhar West Assembly constituency in Jalandhar, Punjab

## Maha police files case against Dhruv Rathee over parody account's post on X

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 13: Maharashtra's cyber police have registered a case against popular YouTuber Dhruv Rathee after a parody account allegedly posted a fake message on X about Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla's daughter, a senior official said Saturday.

According to the state cyber department, the account with the handle @dhruvrahee had claimed on X that Birla's daughter had cleared the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exam without appearing for it.

The X bio of the account reads, "This is the fan and parody account and not affiliated with the original account of @dhruv\_rathee. Not impersonating anyone. This account is Parody"

Acting on a complaint by a relative of Birla, police booked the YouTuber under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) sections for defamation, intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of peace, and statement leading to mischief, as well as the IT Act, the official said.



When pointed out that the alleged fake message was posted by a parody account and not the one belonging to Rathee, the official said, "We are investigating the matter."

The parody account on Saturday posted another tweet saying, "As directed by @MahaCyber1, I have deleted all my posts and comments on Anjali Birla, I will like to apologise as I was unaware about the facts and copied someone else' tweets and shared it."

## Pune police book Khedkar's parents

Police have also registered an FIR against the IAS probationer's parents Manorama and Dilip Khedkar beside five others, days after a video showing Manorama allegedly threatening some persons with a gun over a land dispute emerged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Pune, July 13: Pune civic body Saturday issued a notice to Manorama Khedkar, mother of controversial probationary IAS officer Puja Khedkar, directing the removal of "unauthorised structures" adjacent to the boundary wall of their bungalow in seven days, officials said.

Police have also registered an FIR against the IAS probationer's parents Manorama and Dilip Khedkar beside five others, days after a video showing Manorama allegedly threatening some persons with a gun over a land dispute emerged.

The 34-year-old officer is in the eye of a storm for allegedly misusing the disability and Other Backward Class (OBC) quota to secure a position in the IAS. On Saturday evening, Pune Municipal Corporation officials tried to hand over the notice to Manorama Khedkar at 'Om Deep' bungalow, located on Baner Road in the city, but didn't get any response after ringing the doorbell. Subsequently, officials stuck the notice on the main door of the bungalow. "We have received a complaint about the structures installed outside your bungalow causing obstacles to the people. Kindly remove the unauthorised structures adjacent to the boundary wall of the bungalow in the next seven days," the notice stated.

Pune Rural Police have booked



Manorama Khedkar and Dilip Khedkar and five others under relevant sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), including section 323 (Dishonest or fraudulent removal or concealment of property), at Paud police station, an official said.

The two-minute video shows Manorama Khedkar, accompanied by her security guards, engaged in a heated argument with some people with a pistol in her hand in Dhadwadi village in Pune's Mulshi tehsil. An official said the incident was about a land parcel bought by Dilip Khedkar, a retired Maharashtra government officer. Locals had claimed the Khedkars had encroached on the land of neighbouring farmers.

In another blow to Puja Khedkar, Pune City traffic police issued a notice to a private company Thursday over the unauthorised use of a beacon light on a private car with the "Maharashtra Government" sign the IAS probationer was found using.

"The luxurious car belongs to a private company. An order was issued against Thermo Verita Engineering Pvt Ltd to produce the car at the nearest police station for further inquiry. In case of default, legal action will be initiated by Pune Police," a senior officer said Saturday.

## SHORT TAKES

### Six killed in road accident in Bengal

Kolkata: Six persons, including four of a family, were killed when the ambulance they were traveling in collided with a truck in West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur district Friday night, police said. According to a senior police officer from the district, identities of two seriously injured persons undergoing treatment at a nearby hospital are yet to be confirmed. The ambulance was transporting a patient, identified as Aparna Bag, from a hospital in Khirpai to Medinipur Medical College and Hospital when the accident took place near Panchami state highway passing through Keshpur.

### DDA postpones demolition drive

New Delhi: The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has deferred the demolition drive on the Yamnaa flood plain near the Majnu Ka Tila gurdwara, sources said Saturday. According to a senior police officer, a demolition drive was conducted at Khyber Pass near Civil Lines to remove encroachment Saturday. Some temporary structures which were illegally made on the lands of Land and Development Office were demolished, police said. Dharanveer Solanki, a Pakistani refugee who lives in Majnu Ka Tila area, said the demolition party was yet to reach his area.

### Three killed in road accident

Dhanbad (Jharkhand): Three people, including a mother and her daughter, were killed and five others sustained injuries when a four-wheeler crashed into their motorcycle in Jharkhand's Dhanbad district Saturday, police said. The incident took place around 10 am on NH-2 near Madaidih, under the jurisdiction of Topchachi police station, police said. Sanjay Kumar, in-charge of Topchachi police station, said the motorcycle was parked by the roadside with a woman and her daughter seated on it, while her husband and son were standing nearby.

### 2 shot dead in Bihar's Munger

Patna: Unidentified gunmen Saturday shot dead two persons in Bihar's Munger district Saturday. An official said that the incident took place at an eatery on the approach road to Sri Krishna Setu.

## SNIPPETS

### Tomato prices may ease in coming weeks

New Delhi: Retail tomato price, which soared to Rs 75 per kg in the national capital, is expected to cool in the coming weeks as supply improves from southern states, a government official said Saturday. The official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said prices of potato and onion, which also spiked due to supply disruptions, are expected to stabilise soon. "Prices of tomato, potato and onion are ruling high in Delhi and some other cities. Extreme heat followed by spells of excess rainfall disrupted supplies, causing a spike in prices in consuming areas," the consumer affairs ministry official told PTI. Tomato price in New Delhi has surged to Rs 75 per kg, but is likely to ease if heavy rainfall does not further disrupt supply chains, he said.

### CPI(M) leader murdered in Tripura ahead of panchayat polls

Agartala: CPI (M) leader Badal Shill who was critically injured in an attack in South Tripura's Rajnagar area died while undergoing treatment at a hospital Saturday, police said. The Opposition CPI(M) alleged that Shill, a zilla parishad candidate in the panchayat polls, was murdered by BJP-backed goons, and called a 12-hour statewide bandh Sunday in protest. The state BJP said police will investigate the case and take necessary actions. Spokesman of South Tripura Ashok Kumar Sinha told PTI that Shill was attacked by a group of people, who are yet to be identified, Friday evening. Shill was attacked with 'dao' or machetes, sticks and other weapons at Rajnagar market, his family alleged. AIG (Law and Order) Ananta Das said he died while undergoing treatment at the state-run GB Pant Hospital in Agartala.

### UP floods: Over 750 villages affected, rivers in spate

Lucknow: More than 750 villages in Uttar Pradesh were affected by flood as rivers continued to be in spate while eight people died in rain-related incidents in a 24-hour period till Saturday evening, officials in the state's relief department said. The state recorded an average of 7.4 mm rainfall in the period, they said. Seven people drowned, while one person died after being hit by lightning in the 24-hour period till Saturday evening, the officials said. The relief department said that rain has led to a rise in the water levels of several rivers, resulting in flooding of 776 villages in 17 districts. The flooding has led to displacement of 3,90,455 people. The state government has set up 996 flood shelters to assist those affected by floods.

# Kitchen budget in tailspin for Delhiites

PRICES OF KITCHEN STAPLES LIKE POTATOES, ONION, AND TOMATOES AS WELL AS GREEN VEGETABLES LIKE CAULIFLOWER, CABBAGE, AND THOSE IN THE GOURD FAMILY HAVE PARTICULARLY SOARED, VENDORS IN THE WHOLESALE MARKETS SAID

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: Crop damage in states like Himachal Pradesh due to delayed rain has sent prices of vegetables skyrocketing in the national capital, with consumers forced to buy daily items such as tomatoes at double the price.

Prices of kitchen staples like potatoes, onion, and tomatoes as well as green vegetables like cauliflower, cabbage, and those in the gourd family have particularly soared, vendors in the wholesale markets said.

"Currently, the wholesale price of tomatoes is around 50 to 60 rupees per kg. The local variety is selling for 1,200 rupees per 28 kilograms (1 crate), and the hybrid variety for 1,400 to 1,700 rupees. Earlier these used to sell for around 25-30 rupees," Sanjay



Bhagat, a trader in Azadpur Sabzi Mandi, said.

"The price for other vegetables in the wholesale market is around 25 to 28 rupees per kg. Vegetables that used to sell for 10 to 15 rupees are now 25 to 30 rupees.

Beans rates have also increased, selling for 40 to 50 rupees per kilogram," he added.

The surge was caused by intense heat and delayed rain this year. Bhagat said most suppliers get tomatoes from Himachal

Pradesh, which had its crop dried up. The crops in the mountains depend on rain, and this time it was too hot, with very little rain, which caused the plants to dry up and get infested with pests, he said. The dry patch was followed by heavy rain, which further damaged the crops.

"Right now, the supply is low, and the quality is poor," Bhagat added. Only two places are supplying tomatoes right now -- Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh -- and according to estimates, the prices will remain high until the new crop from Maharashtra arrives around August 10-15, another trader in Okhla Sabzi Mandi said. "The new crop takes about 60 days to grow. It is estimated that the prices will start stabilising around August 15," he said, adding, the demand is still steady.

Several people in Delhi PTI spoke to say the high prices of vegetables have sent their budgets in a tailspin. "I am only buying limited quantities and only those items which are absolutely necessary in the kitchen. A common man cannot afford to buy vegetables right now," Sarita, who was buying groceries in the Laxmi Nagar vegetable market, said.

Deepak, in Mehrauli vegetable market, said, "Earlier, with 200 to 300 rupees, we could buy vegetables for the entire week but now it is spent in just two to three days. It has become difficult to manage the kitchen budget."

For many restaurants, though the hike in vegetable rates has inflated the cost of dishes served to customers, they refrain from recalibrating the prices.

## 4 kids die due to Chandipura virus in Gujarat

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Himmatnagar (Gujarat), July 13: Four children have died and two others are undergoing treatment in Gujarat's Sabarkantha district for suspected infection of Chandipura virus, an official said Saturday.

The two children are being treated at the civil hospital at Himmatnagar in the district. Chandipura virus causes fever, with symptoms similar to flu, and acute encephalitis (inflammation of brain). The pathogen is a member of the Vesiculovirus genus of the family Rhabdoviridae. It is transmitted by vectors like mosquitoes, ticks and sandflies. Blood samples of all six kids have been sent to the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune for confirmation and their results are awaited, Sabarkantha Chief District Health Officer Raj Sutariya said.





Anyone is picked up and put in jail. There is pressure on the courts, you (the government) are running the central agencies, you are jailing your opponents, corruption and anarchy are rising, and China has made an incursion. The situation was the same at that time. Indira ji worked in a much dangerous situation

SANJAY RAUT | SHIV SENA (UBT) LEADER

## GLOBAL SUMMIT FOR MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT SECTOR

India will host the first World Audio Visual and Entertainment Summit in November alongside the International Film Festival of India in Goa, with I&B Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw promising to strengthen the ecosystem for the protection of intellectual property rights in the media and entertainment sector



## of the day uote

The first condition of good governance is the rule of law. Every person loves a just system and for justice to be delivered on time, and the experts in that field are equally important. India is known today for this rule of law

YOGI ADITYANATH | UTTAR PRADESH CM

Congratulations to all for Aam Aadmi Party's great victory in the Jalandhar West Vidhan Sabha constituency by-elections. The victory with a big lead shows that people across Punjab are very happy with the work of our government. We will make Jalandhar West the 'best' as promised during the bypoll. Congratulations to Mohinder Bhagat ji

BHAGWANT MANN | PUNJAB CM

My heartfelt tribute to Bhanubhakta Acharya, the pioneer poet of Nepali language, on this auspicious occasion of his birth anniversary

MAMATA BANERJEE | WEST BENGAL CM

## POST OF THE DAY

Kerala tops NITI Aayog's SDG India Index 2023-24 with a score of 79! Our commitment to holistic development shines through. Proud of our achievements and determined to reach even higher! Let's keep pushing forward. #Kerala #SDG #SustainableDevelopment

@PRajeevOfficial

## SHORT TAKES

### Heavy rains lash Kerala

Thiruvananthapuram: As heavy rains lashed several parts of Kerala, the India Meteorological Department Saturday issued an orange alert in three northern districts of the state for the day. The IMD issued an orange alert in Kozhikode, Kannur and Kasaragod and a yellow alert in nine other districts of the state for the day. The weather department also predicted thunderstorms with moderate rainfall and gusty winds at one or two places in Pathanamthitta, Alappuzha, Kottayam, Idukki, and Ernakulam districts for the day.

### Kashmiri pandit group holds protest

Jammu: A group of Kashmiri migrant pandits held a brief protest outside the Raj Bhavan here Saturday against alleged persecution of the community on this day in 1931 in the valley. All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference (ASKPC), one of the organisations of the migrant pandits, said they observe the day as "black day". July 13 used to be a public holiday in the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir and a grand official function was held every year on this day to pay homage to 22 Kashmiri people, who were killed by the army of a Dogra ruler in 1931.

### Couple killed over 'land dispute'

Khunti (Jharkhand): A couple was killed and two others were seriously injured after they were allegedly attacked by one of their relatives over a "land dispute" in Jharkhand's Khunti district, police said Saturday. The incident took place in Jhora Toli village under the jurisdiction of Rania police station Friday evening.

## ASSEMBLY BYPOLL RESULTS

# Reflects changing political climate in country: Cong

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge lauded the party workers and said the victory shows that the people have completely rejected the "arrogance, misgovernance and negative politics of the BJP"

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: The Congress Saturday hailed the Assembly bypoll results in which the INDIA bloc parties won 10 out of 13 seats, with Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi asserting it has become clear that the web of "fear and illusion" woven by the BJP has been broken. The bypolls were held Wednesday in four seats in West Bengal, three in Himachal Pradesh, two in Uttarakhand, and one each in Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. The Congress, TMC, AAP and DMK are among the INDIA bloc parties that fielded candidates in the bypolls.

The Congress said the results "reflect the changing political climate in the country". Reacting to the results, Kharge said the party bows before the people for the positive result of the Assembly by-elections. "We thank and express our gratitude to them from the bottom of our hearts for voting for the Congress party candidates. We salute all the Congress workers for their hard work and efforts in adverse circumstances," he said. "This victory shows that the people have completely rejected the arrogance, misgovernance and negative politics of the BJP," Kharge said.

"This is also a strong proof of the falling political credibility of Modi-Shah ji," he added. In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, "The results of the by-elections held



Congress workers celebrate after party's victory in Uttarakhand Assembly by-elections in Chamoli

### The INDIA bloc parties won 10 Assembly seats, while the BJP clinched two and an Independent one, as the votes were counted Saturday for the by-elections held earlier this week on 13 seats in seven states

in 7 states have made it clear that the web of 'fear and illusion' woven by the BJP has been broken. Every class, including farmers, youth, labourers, businessmen and employees wants to completely destroy the dictatorship and establish the rule of justice." The public is now completely standing with the INDIA bloc for the betterment of their lives and to protect the Constitution, he said. Reacting to the results, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said that in the by-elections held on 13 seats in seven states, the people of the country have given their support to the INDIA bloc. "The people of the country have understood that the politics of misleading people 100 years back and 100 years ahead will not benefit the country. The people want positive politics that improves their present and prepares a clear blueprint for a

bright future," Priyanka Gandhi said. "We are committed to the needs and aspirations of young India," she said. The Congress won both the Assembly bypolls in Uttarakhand and in Himachal Pradesh, it secured two out of the three seats where the bye-elections were held. In a statement, Congress general secretary K C Venugopal said today's by-poll results stand as a resounding victory for democracy and a strong rebuke to the BJP's "divisive politics". Out of the 13 seats, the INDIA bloc has secured an impressive 10 seats demonstrating the rejection of the "BJP's anti-people, anti-youth policies, and divisive politics". Even amidst their attempts to undermine our democracy, the truth and the will of the people have prevailed, Venugopal asserted.

"Today's results are a tight slap on the BJP's face, showcasing the public's strong disapproval of their pro-rich, dictatorial politics. The defeat of those who abandoned our cause for the BJP in Himachal and Uttarakhand underscores the rejection of opportunism over principled governance," he said. This significant win sends a clear message that the misuse of religion for political gains, as seen in Ayodhya and now in Badrinath, will not be endorsed by the electorate, Venugopal said.

## Govt fixes meeting with states to boost waterways transport

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi, July 13: The Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways will convene the State Maritime & Waterways Transport Committees' meeting Tuesday to hold discussions for the comprehensive development of maritime and waterways transport across India and expanding its reach to include the remaining states.

The meeting to be held via video conferencing will be chaired by T.K. Ramachandran, Secretary, Ministry of Ports, Shipping, and Waterways, according to an official statement issued Saturday. Recognising the need for a unified approach to manage and integrate the waterways transportation sector, the Ministry has established State Maritime & Waterways Transport Committees (SMWTCs) to coordinate various initiatives and schemes within each state.

Each state committee is headed by the Chief Secretary or Additional Chief Secretary and includes representatives from major ports, maritime boards, state PWD, Inland Waterways, Department of Tourism, Department of Fisheries, Railways, NHA and Customs. Currently, SMWTCs have been constituted in 13 states, including Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Himachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Puducherry, Rajasthan, Bihar, Assam, Goa, Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Lakshadweep, with plans to establish them in all 30 coastal and waterways states and UTs of India.

# CIC has powers to constitute benches, frame regulations: SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: The Central Information Commission has powers to constitute benches and frame regulations, the Supreme Court has said while observing that the autonomy of CIC is of paramount importance for its effective functioning.

A bench of Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Satish Chandra Sharma last Wednesday said the autonomy and independence of administrative bodies are fundamental to their ability to perform their designated functions effectively. "The Chief Information Commissioner's powers to frame regulations pertaining to the constitution of benches of the commission are upheld as such powers are within the ambit of Section 12(4) of the RTI Act," the bench said.

The top court said institutions like the Central Information Commission (CIC) are established to carry out specialised tasks that require a level of impartiality and expertise that can only be achieved if they are free from undue interference.

"While the RTI Act does not explicitly grant CIC the authority to frame regulations, the overarching powers granted under Section 12(4) of the RTI Act inherently include the ability to manage the commission's af-



fairs effectively. "These regulations are essential tools for ensuring efficient administration and operation of the commission, addressing various procedural and managerial aspects necessary for fulfilling its mandate," the bench said.

The observations of the top court came in a judgement in which it set aside a 2010 verdict of the Delhi High Court.

The high court, by the impugned order, quashed the Central Information Commission (Management) Regulations, 2007, framed by the chief information commissioner and held that the CIC has no power to constitute benches of the commission.

The apex court, however, said ensuring the independence of these bodies is essential for maintaining the integrity and efficacy of the administrative system.

Interfering in the functioning of these bodies can be detrimental, as it undermines their ability to operate efficiently and impartially, it said.

## Search continues to find girl's body from canal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Nandyal (Andhra Pradesh), July 13: Andhra Pradesh police are searching for the body of the nine-year-old girl who was allegedly raped and pushed into a canal here by three minor boys, said an official Saturday.

The three boys allegedly gang-raped the girl 7 July evening who was last seen playing in a park and then pushed her into the Mucchumarri Lift Irrigation Canal in Nandyal district. "We are yet to trace the girl's body. We are still searching. One National

Disaster Response Force (NDRF) team and a State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) are searching as well," the official told PTI.

### ANDHRA GANGRAPE CASE

According to police, up to 70 NDRF and SDRF personnel are searching for the girl's body. A senior official observed that the three minor boys have "confessed" to raping the girl but noted that it is important to find the body and scientifically prove the offence. "They have con-

fessed, and we have the confession statement also. If the body is found then the prosecution side will get a conviction easily. That is a major thing," the official said. Besides the NDRF and SDRF teams, five police investigation teams have also been deployed to crack the case. Police are also tapping technical data to check if anybody else is involved in the crime. Two of the accused minors are 15 years old, while the other one is 12 years old. They are all from the same Mucchumarri village and knew each other, police said.

## NMC directs all medical colleges to set up TCCs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: The National Medical Commission (NMC) has directed medical colleges across the country to set up "Tobacco Cessation Centres" (TCC) to combat the adverse effects of tobacco use and promote public health.

This initiative aims to strengthen the healthcare infrastructure by integrating specialised services for tobacco cessation into the educational and healthcare framework, a circular issued by the NMC Friday stated. "In line with its commitment to promoting public health and combating the adverse effects of tobacco use, the government has decided to establish tobacco cessation centres in medical colleges across the country," it said. "All the hospitals attached to each of the medical colleges are directed to make provisions for 'tobacco cessation centre'. This can be a special clinic run by the Department of Psychiatry and/or other departments," the circular said. These centres should also be established in rural and urban health centres that the college has adopted for training. These centres along

### According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey in India (GATS 2) 2016-17, a staggering number of individuals are tobacco users

with tobacco cessation, will also work as drug de-addiction centres, the circular added.

According to the Global Adult Tobacco Survey in India (GATS 2) 2016-17, a staggering number of individuals are tobacco users.

Studies have shown that India has the second largest number of tobacco users (268 million or 28.6 per cent of all adults in India) in the world. Of these at least 1.2 million die every year from tobacco related diseases.

Nearly 27 per cent of all cancers in India are due to tobacco usage. The total direct and indirect cost of diseases attributable to tobacco use was a staggering ₹182,000 crore which is nearly 1.8 per cent of India's GDP.

Tobacco smokers are at a higher risk of developing TB and experiencing more severe forms of the disease.



Residents of a flood affected area take refuge in a makeshift shelter, at Kaliabor in Nagaon, Assam

## HEMANT MEETS SUNITA KEJRIWAL

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, who was present during the meeting at the Delhi Chief Minister's official residence here, said the talks were cordial and the issue of "misuse" of central probe agencies against Opposition leaders was discussed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren and his wife Kalpana Soren Saturday met Sunita Kejriwal, the wife of



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal who is in jail in connection with the corruption case related to the alleged excise policy scam.

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, who was present during the meeting at the Delhi Chief Minister's official residence here, said the talks were cordial and the issue of "misuse" of central probe agencies against

Opposition leaders was discussed. "He (Hemant Soren) and Kejriwal both were victims of the BJP's politics of ill will, revenge and efforts to stop Opposition leaders from campaigning in the Lok Sabha polls," he charged. The Jharkhand Chief Minister has extended full support to Kejriwal, his family and the AAP in the fight against the "atrocities", Singh added.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) posted a video of the meeting on 'X' and captioned it "INDIA is united against dictatorship". Earlier in the day, Hemant Soren and his wife met Congress Parliamentary Party chief Sonia Gandhi and described it as a courtesy call. Soren, the executive president of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, resigned as the Chief

Minister before his arrest January 31 by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged land scam. After spending around five months in prison, he secured bail and became Chief Minister again July 4.

Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Kejriwal was arrested by ED March 21 in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam. The Supreme Court granted him interim bail Friday but he will remain in jail as the CBI had arrested him in a related matter.

The issue of Soren and Kejriwal's arrest by the central probe agency was prominently raised by the leaders of the Opposition INDIA bloc during the Lok Sabha poll campaigning.

## of the day quote

If we want to win, if we want to prevail, to save our country and to defend it, we need to lift all the limitations (targeting Russia)

**VOLODYMYR ZELENSKYI** | PRESIDENT, UKRAINE

The focus on combating terrorism has had limited effect in stopping rampant illegal trafficking in the Sahel and the effort needs more police

**LEONARDO SIMAO** | UN SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE FOR THE SAHEL AND WEST AFRICA

Brazil will likely be one of the countries with the greatest, if not the greatest, reduction in food insecurity relative to its population, as well as in extreme poverty and poverty

**WELLINGTON DIAS** | MINISTER OF SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, BRAZIL

## SHORT TAKES

### Unlawful marriage: Relief for Khan, wife

**Islamabad:** A Pakistani court acquitted former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Khan Saturday charges of unlawful marriage, a day after his party won more seats in parliament, ramping up pressure on the country's fragile government. The couple was sentenced to seven years in February when a court found them guilty of breaking Islamic law by failing to observe the required interval between Bibi's divorce from a previous marriage and her marriage to Khan. However, barely an hour after his acquittal in the case, an anti-terrorism court in Lahore approved the request to arrest the PTI leader in three cases linked to the unprecedented May 9 riots following his arrest in an alleged corruption case.

### Minister's murder: 5 jailed in Ecuador

**Quito:** The two instigators of the 2023 assassination of Ecuadorian presidential candidate Fernando Villavicencio were sentenced Friday to 34 years and eight months in prison. Three accomplices were sentenced to 12 years in prison. The Prosecutor's Office had requested the maximum sentence for the five defendants. Villavicencio, 59, was killed by gunmen on motorcycles last August 9 as he left a school in Ecuador's capital, Quito, after a campaign rally. Thirteen people were injured.

### Baldwin's shooting case dismissed

**Santa Fe:** A New Mexico judge Friday brought a sudden and stunning end to the involuntary manslaughter case against Alec Baldwin, dismissing it in the middle of the actor's trial and saying it cannot be filed again. Judge Mary Marlowe Sommer dismissed the case based on the misconduct of police and prosecutors over the withholding of evidence from the defense in the 2021 shooting of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the set of the film "Rust."

### School building collapse kills 22

**Abuja:** Twenty-two people were killed after a two-storey school building collapsed in central Nigeria's Plateau state Saturday. A total of 154 people were trapped under the debris, and everyone apart from those who died was rescued and is being treated for injuries in various hospitals.



The United States...needs to recognise the reality and understand, once and for all, that Iran does not - and will not - respond to pressure (and) that Iran's defence doctrine does not include nuclear weapons  
**MASOUD PEZESHKIAN** | PRESIDENT-ELECT, IRAN

## SPACE BLUNDER

A SpaceX rocket has failed for the first time in nearly a decade, leaving the company's internet satellites in an orbit so low that they're doomed to fall through the atmosphere and burn up. The Falcon 9 rocket blasted off from California Thursday night, carrying 20 Starlink satellites



# Democratic Party's Biden crisis

Democrats are worried that Biden's low approval ratings and growing concerns that he is too old for the job could cause them to lose seats in the House of Representatives and Senate, leaving them with no grip on power in Washington should Trump win the White House

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

**New York, July 13:** For more than two weeks now, the Democratic Party has been mired in crisis. And yet there is no sign that the threat to Joe Biden's reelection is nearing a conclusion, as the president digs in and a growing chorus of Democratic officials, donors and strategists calls for him to step aside.

Donors and high-profile endorsers are repudiating Biden, morale inside and outside the campaign is weak, and some top Democrats are pondering whether to make a move against the embattled president. One of Biden's allies privately described a cycle of alternating hope and despair in the style of the movie "Groundhog Day".

The extraordinary intra-party debate still rages 15 days after Biden's disastrous debate performance, with the president's Thursday news conference doing



If current trends continue, Mr Trump could rack up one of the most decisive presidential victories since 2008

**DOUG SOSNIK** | DEMOCRATIC STRATEGIST

little to quell fears about his prospects against Republican Donald Trump.

Another five Democratic members of Congress called on Biden to step aside in the hours since the president's high-profile press conference, bringing to nearly 20 the total number of Democratic US representatives and senators publicly pushing Biden to leave the race.

Biden's acknowledgment Thursday that delegates were free to vote their conscience at the party's August convention — or in a virtual roll call vote that

could come much sooner — sparked a new wave of urgent conversations among Democratic officials Friday.

"I'm in that box of delegates who are really reconsidering if they're going to cast their vote for President Biden," said Joe Salazar, a Democratic National Committee member from Colorado.

Biden insists he will not step down. And indeed, other delegates say they're firmly behind the president.

The president's team is aggressively pushing back against a collection of new data shared

among Democratic officials in recent days arguing that he's now at a considerable disadvantage in his bid to defeat Trump in November. In fact, fear is pervasive among donors and strategists working on House and Senate races that Biden's weak standing could undermine the party's outlook even in blue states.

Democratic Party weighs Biden's impact on House races as Republicans grow confident of holding majority

Hours after his campaign issued a new strategy memo announcing a renewed focus on three pivotal Midwestern states — the so-called "Blue Wall" that has long been must-win for Democrats — one of the campaign's field organisers in Wisconsin quit.

The lower-level staffer's departure, announced during an internal staff conference call Thursday, was attributed directly to post-debate frustration, according to two people familiar with the matter granted anonymity to share details of the private discussion. A Biden campaign spokesperson confirmed the staff departure.

While one person leaving a campaign of more than 1,000 people isn't proof of a larger exodus, other signs of trouble continued to pop up.

One lawmaker, Rep Mike Levin of California, told Biden directly

Friday that he should step down in a virtual call hosted for members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus, according to three people familiar with the matter who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private meeting.

The call began with Biden soliciting feedback on how to appeal to the Hispanic vote and what campaign events he should join over the next few months. When the call was opened to questions, Levin raised his hand to give Biden a talk about his Southern California district, with voters telling him that the president should not be on top of the party's ticket for 2024.

Levin, according to two of the people, then encouraged the president to listen to those constituents and step down.

"I have deep respect for President Biden's five-plus decades of public service and incredible appreciation for the work we've done together these last three and a half years," the lawmaker said in a statement. "But I believe the time has come for President Biden to pass the torch."

A private debate is playing out among the party's donor class in particular, which is far from united on whether Vice President Kamala Harris should inherit the nomination should Biden ultimately step aside, according to conversations with more than a half-dozen donors granted anonymity to discuss private conversations.

## Israeli strike kills 71, injures 289

REUTERS

**Cairo, July 13:** An Israeli airstrike targeted Hamas' military chief Mohammed Deif in Gaza Saturday, a security official and Israel Army Radio said, in an attack that the enclave's health ministry said had killed at least 71 Palestinians.

It was unclear whether Deif was killed, the security official said. Army Radio said Deif was hiding in a building in Israeli-designated humanitarian zone Al-Mawasi, west of the southern city of Khan Younis.

Deif was one of the masterminds of Hamas' October 7 attack on Israel that triggered the war in Gaza. He has survived seven Israeli assassination attempts, the most recent in 2021 and has topped Israel's most wanted list for decades.

The Gaza health ministry said at least 71 Palestinians had been killed in the strike and 289 injured.

Israeli Defence Minister Yoav Gallant was holding special consultations, his office said, in light of "developments in Gaza". It was unclear how the strike would affect ceasefire talks underway in Doha and Cairo.

## China blasts US' Tibet-China dispute bill, pledges to defend its interests

REUTERS

**Beijing, July 13:** China expressed strong opposition Saturday to a US law signed by President Joe Biden that presses Beijing to resolve a dispute over Tibet's demands for greater autonomy, vowing to "firmly defend" its interests.

Biden signed into law Friday the Tibet dispute act, which seeks to push Beijing to hold talks with Tibetan leaders, stalled since 2010, to secure a negotiated agreement on the Himalayan region and spur China to address the Tibetan people's aspirations on their historical, cultural, religious and linguistic identity.

The law "grossly interferes in China's domestic affairs, undermines China's interests, and sends a severely wrong signal to the 'Tibet independence' forces," China's foreign ministry said.

Although Washington recognises Tibet as a part of China, the law appears to question that position, analysts say. The US has long supported the rights



of the Tibetan people to practice their religion and culture, accusing China of human rights violations in the remote region bordering India.

"The US must not implement the Act," the China's ministry said. "If the US continues down the wrong path, China will take resolute measures to firmly defend its sovereignty, security and development interests."

Attention has focussed on Tibet-China issues as the Dalai Lama, recuperating from a medical procedure, turned 89 last week. The exiled spiritual leader has said he will clarify questions about his succession around his 90th birthday, while China insists it will choose his successor. The 14th Dalai Lama fled Tibet

## Italian police free 33 Indian farm labourers from 'slavery'

REUTERS

**Rome, July 13:** Italian police said Saturday they had freed 33 Indian farm labourers from slave-like working conditions in the northern Verona province and seized almost half a million euros (\$545,300) from their two alleged abusers.

Labour exploitation is in the spotlight in Italy following an accident in June in which an Indian fruit picker died after his arm was severed by machinery.

In the latest case, police said the alleged gang-masters, also from India, brought fellow nationals to Italy on seasonal work permits, asking them to pay 17,000 euros each and promising them a better future.

The migrants were given farm jobs, working seven days a week and 10-12 hours a day for just 4 euros per hour, which was entirely docked from them until they settled all their debts, police said, describing the migrants' treatment as "slavery".

Some were asked to continue working for free to pay an additional 13,000 euros for a permanent work permit "which, in reality, would have never been given to them," the police statement said.

The alleged abusers were charged with crimes connected to slavery and labour exploitation, while the victims will be offered protection, work opportunities and legal residency papers, the police said.



In this photo provided by NASA and the Space Telescope Science Institute, two interacting galaxies are captured by the Webb Space Telescope in the infrared. Scientists say the neighboring galaxies, nicknamed Penguin, right, and the Egg, left, have been tangled up for tens of millions of years

# US' front line against fentanyl is a Golden Retriever

Goose is one of 536 US Customs and Border Protection canines trained to sniff out drugs, guns, ammunition, money and hidden passengers at America's land border crossings, airports and seaports

REUTERS

**San Diego, July 13:** One of America's most valuable defenders against fentanyl trafficking at the Mexico border uses his nose to root out illicit drugs, an old-school technique that authorities say is a key to reducing the flow of deadly synthetic opioids.

Goose, an enthusiastic Golden Retriever, weaves through a sea of idling cars on a warm afternoon at San Diego's massive legal border crossing, one of the most transited in the world with roughly 100,000 people entering

the US each day. The border crossing is open around the clock and dogs contend with exhaust fumes, hot pavement and unpredictable workdays that can go from routine to tense in seconds.

Now Goose and his handler, customs officer Joseph Arcia, trek inside to demonstrate to Reuters how the six-year-old canine can sniff out his training chew toy among the throngs of pedestrians crossing into the US on foot, replicating what he and other dogs do to detect fentanyl and other contraband daily.

Goose sits when he finds the toy planted on a random volunteer crossing the border: Mission accomplished.

The Golden Retriever is one of 536 US Customs and Border Protection canines trained to sniff out drugs, guns, ammunition, money and hidden passengers at America's land border crossings, airports and seaports. The rise of illicit fentanyl and the epidemic of related overdoses prompted CBP



to take the then-unprecedented step in 2017 of training drug-sniffing dogs to detect it, a program that has proved crucial to the agency's efforts.

They're like biosensors. It's really the best technology that's available

**MICHAEL GOULD** | FOUNDING MEMBER OF NYPPD'S CANINE UNIT

### DOGS OVER TECH

Despite millions of dollars in technology that allows CBP to scan vehicles and data analytics that help target possible smugglers, a dog's sense of smell remains a vital tool for uncovering fentanyl and other narcotics.

## An estimated 75K people died from synthetic opioid overdoses in 2023, mostly involving fentanyl

Fentanyl is a powerful synthetic opioid that was approved by US authorities for use as an anesthetic in 1968, but a spike in clandestine production and fatal overdoses in the past decade has made it a priority for law enforcement and health providers.

CBP Office of Field Operations canines have been involved with seizing more than 63,000 pounds [28,576 kg] of fentanyl since the programme started, according to agency statistics.

Sidney Aki, the CBP field office director for the San Diego area, worked as a canine handler at the start of his career in the 1990s. Speaking to Reuters at the San Ysidro port of entry in late May, he said the dogs oper-

ated in conjunction with scanners and data analytics to root out fentanyl and other contraband.

"Of course, if we had more canines, if we had more personnel partnered up with canines, we would continue to do more and more," he said.

The drug-sniffing dogs are trained to detect six substances: marijuana, cocaine, heroin, methamphetamine, ecstasy and fentanyl, initially by filling chew toys with "pseudo-narcotics" that smell like the actual drug.

The dogs tend to be German Shepherds, Labradors, Dutch Shepherds and German Shorthaired Pointers, Sifford said. Goose is one of three Golden Retrievers in the programme.

While other hard drugs can have distinct scents - heroin sometimes smells like vinegar, for instance - fentanyl is usually odorless, at least to humans.

The dogs do have limitations. They can typically only be out searching vehicles or people for about 20 minutes in warmer weather before they need a break, officials said.

## of the day quote

Given the innate strengths, I described and the resolve to achieve its aspirational goals, it is possible to imagine India striking out into the next decade to become the second largest economy in the world not by 2048, but by 2031 and the largest economy of the world by 2060

MICHAEL D PATRA | RBI DEPUTY GOVERNOR

Including investments in startups along with investments in residential property can make startup investing mainstream

NETHIN KAMATH | ZERODHA CO-FOUNDER AND CEO

Accurate valuation is highly useful to achieve successful resolution of stressed assets

RAVI MITAL | IBBI CHIEF



**Tax relief for middle-class and salaried classes will not only enhance purchasing power but will also serve as a catalyst in increasing consumption patterns**

SAUGATA GUPTA | MARICO LTD MD & CEO

## DOMESTIC INVESTORS INFUSE \$638MN IN REALTY SECTOR

Domestic investors pumped \$637.9 million in the Indian real estate during April-June -- a fivefold jump on annual basis -- expecting better returns amid strong demand, according to Vestian. Real estate consultant Vestian Saturday released data for institutional investments in real estate during the second quarter of 2024 calendar year.



# Softbank exits Paytm at loss of \$150mn

Billionaire Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway Inc also exited Paytm around seven months back by selling shares at a lower-than-acquired price

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: Japan's Softbank investment arm Softbank Vision Fund exited from Paytm in the June quarter at a loss of around USD 150 million, sources aware of the development said.

Softbank invested about USD 1.5 billion in One97 Communications -- the owner of Paytm brand -- in tranches in 2017.

"Softbank has exited Paytm at a loss of 10-12 per cent. The total loss is around USD 150 million," one of the sources said.

Softbank held around 18.5 per cent stake in Paytm before the company's initial public offer-



ing (IPO) in 2021. It held a 17.3 per cent stake through SVF India Holdings (Cayman) Ltd and 1.2 per cent through SVF Panther (Cayman) Ltd.

SVF Panther sold its entire stake during the IPO for ₹1,689 crore, about USD 225 million.

"Softbank announced that it will exit Paytm in 24 months from the time of the IPO. The exit was in line with Softbank's plan. However, the company did anticipate loss at that time," another source said.

Softbank had acquired Paytm shares at an average price of

about ₹800 apiece.

Paytm share price was listed at ₹1,955, lower by 9 per cent, and has not matched its issue price of ₹2,150 apiece to date.

The share price of Paytm plummeted further after the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) banned its associate firm Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) from carrying out transactions. It touched an all-time low of ₹310 May 9.

Paytm reported widening of losses to ₹550 crore in the fourth quarter of 2023-24 following the ban on transactions related to

its payments bank.

The company during the reported quarter wrote off ₹227 crore investment for a 39 per cent stake in PPBL following future uncertainties associated with its business operations, including the uncertainty of any other regulatory development, etc.

For the year ended March 31, 2024, the company's loss narrowed to ₹1,422.4 crore. Paytm had recorded a loss of ₹1,776.5 crore in FY23.

Billionaire Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway Inc also exited Paytm around seven months back by selling shares at a lower-than-acquired price.

The company had acquired 2.6 per cent stake in Paytm for ₹1,279.7 per share at an aggregate value of ₹2,179 crore, as per an official document.

The shares were disposed of at an average price of ₹877.29 apiece, taking the transaction value to ₹1,370.63 crore in November.

Paytm's shares closed at ₹467.25 apiece Friday.

# Direct tax mop-up rises 20% to ₹5.74L-cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: Net direct tax collection grew 19.54 per cent to over ₹5.74 lakh crore so far this fiscal on higher advance tax payment by corporates.

The first instalment of advance tax, which was due June 15, rose 27.34 per cent to Rs 1.48 lakh crore. This includes Corporation Income Tax (CIT) at ₹1.14 lakh crore and Personal Income Tax (PIT) at ₹34,470 crore.

The net direct tax collection of ₹5,74,357 crore (as of July 11, 2024) includes CIT at ₹2,10,274 crore and PIT at ₹3,46,036 crore, as per data released by Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Saturday.

Securities Transaction Tax (STT) contributed ₹16,634 crore to the direct tax collection, it said.

During the same period last year, net direct tax collection was ₹4,80,458 crore.



Refunds amounting to ₹70,902 crore have also been issued in FY25 till July 11, which is 64.4 per cent higher than refunds issued during the same period in the previous year.

For April-July 11, gross collection of direct taxes (before adjusting for refunds) stood at ₹6.45 lakh crore compared to ₹5.23 lakh crore in the year-ago period, showing a growth of 23.24 per cent.

For full fiscal year, the interim budget has pegged direct tax collection at ₹21.99 lakh crore.

## SHORT TAKES

### MTNL, BSNL merger unlikely

New Delhi: The government is considering the option of handing over operations of Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL) to BSNL through an agreement, instead of pursuing a merger route, a source privy to the development said. A final call on this is likely to be taken in a month's time. The source said the option of handing over debt-laden MTNL's operations to Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) through an agreement is being looked into. The source said that given MTNL's high debt, a merger with BSNL was not a favourable option. Once the decision is taken, the proposal would be placed before the Committee of Secretaries, and thereafter taken to the Cabinet. Amid mounting financial woes, MTNL this week informed in a statutory filing that it is unable to make interest payment to certain bondholders "due to insufficient funds".

### Goyal to meet G7 trade mins

New Delhi: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal will hold bilateral meetings at Reggio Calabria in Italy next week with his counterparts from G7 nations and discuss ways to boost trade and investments, an official statement said Saturday. Reggio Calabria is a coastal city in southern Italy. The Group of Seven (G7) industrialised nations are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the UK, and the US. These meetings aim to explore new avenues for trade and investment, resolve bilateral trade issues, and deepen economic cooperation, it said. Goyal will hold these deliberations on the sidelines of the outreach session of the G7 Trade Ministers' Meeting (July 16-17) in Italy.

### D-Mart's Q1 net profit rises 17.5%

New Delhi: Avenue Supermarts Ltd, which owns and operates the retail chain D-Mart, Saturday reported an increase of 17.45 per cent in consolidated net profit at ₹773.68 crore for the June quarter, helped by improvement in sales from general merchandise and apparels. The company had posted a net profit of ₹658.71 crore in the April-June period a year ago, according to a regulatory filing from Avenue Supermarts. Its revenue from operations was up 18.57 per cent to ₹14,069.14 crore during the quarter under review as against ₹11,865.44 crore in the corresponding quarter last fiscal. Avenue Supermarts' total expenses in the June quarter were up 18.62 per cent.

# Mutual funds raise record ₹14,370cr via NFOs in June

INDO-ASIAN NEWS SERVICE

Mumbai, July 13: Mutual fund industry witnessed strong inflow via new fund offers (NFOs) in June as 11 NFOs of different fund houses collected Rs 14,370 crore last month.

It is the highest-ever inflow in new offerings. The previous high was recorded in July 2021 when four NFOs had raised Rs 13,709 crore.

Thirty active equity schemes have been launched by mutual funds in the first half of 2024, compared to 51 in the entire 2023.

An investment of Rs 37,885 crore has been made in NFOs from the beginning of this year till June, which was Rs 36,657 crore in the entire last year. A total of 27 NFOs were launched in 2022 and a total investment of Rs 29,586 crore was made in them.

The Indian stock market continues to rise after the results of the Lok Sabha elections. Due to an ongoing rally, a large number of mutual fund houses are coming up with NFOs.

Currently, around seven active and passive equity NFOs



are open for subscription. Active NFOs include ICICI Prudential MF's Energy Opportunities Fund, Franklin Templeton MF's Multicap NFO, and Edelweiss MF's Business Cycle Fund.

Most of the NFOs are coming in high-risk categories like thematic. Expressing concern over this, Neil Parekh, CEO and Chairman of Parag Parekh Financial Advisory Services Limited (PPFAS), said on social media, "Wow!, the number of new NFOs, especially thematic funds, has increased. This is quite scary... everyone needs to be careful."

# Govt plans ₹750cr fund to promote startups & rural enterprises

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: The government is poised to launch the 'Agri Fund for Startups and Rural Enterprises' (AgriSURE) to support agripreneurs.

Investments through the fund will be sector-agnostic, and debt alternative Investment Funds (AIFs), as well as direct equity support to start-ups working in Agriculture and allied sectors, an official statement said Friday.

This initiative aims to foster innovation and sustainability in India's agricultural sector

through the establishment of a Rs 750 crore Category-II Alternative Investment Fund (AIF), it said.

The fund will offer both equity and debt support, specifically targeting high-risk, high-impact activities in the agriculture value chain, it said.

The announcement was made at the pre-launch stakeholder meet at NABARD Headquarters in Mumbai on Friday.

The event was attended by key stakeholders, including financial institutions, investors, AIF managers, and agri-startups, it said.

# Q1 results, global trends to influence trading activity

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

New Delhi, July 13: Quarterly earnings from several blue-chip firms, including Infosys and Reliance Industries, global trends, along with trading activity of foreign investors, would act as the major driving factors for equity markets' movement in a holiday-shortened week ahead, analysts said.

The domestic WPI inflation data for June -- scheduled to be announced Monday -- will also influence trading sentiments, traders said.

Markets will remain closed Wednesday for Muharram.

Among major quarterly earnings to be tracked this week are from HDFC Life Insurance Company, Bajaj Auto, BPCL, JSW Steel, Asian Paints, Infosys, and Reliance Industries.

"Q1 earnings will be a key focus this week as numerous companies, including heavyweights Infosys, and Reliance, are set to release their results. Additionally, pre-Budget discussions are expected to contribute to market volatility," Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd, said.



On the global front, a significant focus will be on China. The country is scheduled to announce its GDP and Industrial Production (IIP) numbers, Meena said.

"Other global factors to watch include the speech by the US Federal Reserve Chairman, US retail sales figures, and macro-economic data from Japan," he added.

"On Monday, markets will react to India's inflation data. Key results this week include

Jio Financial Services, HDFC Life, Asian Paints, LTIMindtree, Infosys, Wipro, JSW Steel, Paytm, etc. Also globally, investors will take cues from China's GDP numbers, US core retail sales data, and ECB (European Central Bank) interest rate decision," Siddhartha Khemka, Head, Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said.

Retail inflation increased to four-month high of 5.08 per cent in June as food items, including vegetables, became dearer; ac-

ording to government data released Friday.

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said, "We expect stock-specific moves to gain traction due to the ongoing earnings season; indeed, IT will be in the limelight due to the good start to the earnings and outlook."

In the week ahead, economic data like China GDP, EuroZone CPI inflation, ECB policy, and the US Fed chair speech will be watched by investors to get cues on market momentum, Nair added.

On a weekly basis, the BSE benchmark jumped 522.74 points, or 0.65 per cent, while the Nifty climbed 178.3 points, or 0.73 per cent.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 622 points, or 0.78 per cent, to settle at a record closing level of 80,519.34 Friday.

During the day, it zoomed 996.17 points, or 1.24 per cent, to hit an all-time high of 80,893.51.

The NSE Nifty surged 186.20 points, or 0.77 per cent, to settle at a record closing high of 24,502.15. Intra-day, it jumped 276.25 points, or 1.13 per cent, to hit a new lifetime peak of 24,592.20.

# IOB, Nabarangpur branch inaugurated

Berhampur: Indian Overseas Bank, Regional Office, Berhampur has opened a new branch named Nabarangpur Branch near Ram Mandir, Chamuriagunda Road, Nabarangpur. The branch was inaugurated by chief guest Dr. Sunil Khora (OAS-A (JB)) BDO, Panchayat Samiti, Nabarangpur in the presence of Manish Kumar, Chief Regional Manager, Regional Office, Berhampur. Sujit Kumar Bhoi, Branch Manager, IOB Nabarangpur Branch and other staff members and customers were also present in the opening ceremony. While addressing the customers and general public, Manish Kumar said that IOB savings



and current accounts have been designed keeping in mind the modern needs of vast sections of society. "Along with this, our loan facility is for every section of the society. Our loan interest rates are quite competitive and

reasonable as compared to the market. All are requested to be partner in their progress as well as bank's progress by joining IOB and giving us an opportunity to become a partner in your progress," Manish Kumar said.

# Tier-I cities dominate in blue-collar gig jobs: Report

**DELHI EMERGES AS THE PRIME HUB FOR GIG WORKERS, LEADING WITH 17.7 PER CENT OF JOB OPENINGS AND 22.9 PER CENT OF APPLICATIONS, REFLECTING ROBUST DEMAND ACROSS SECTORS**

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 13: With a rise in gig economy, tier-one cities led in short-term blue-collar employment opportunities, accounting for 67.1 per cent openings from June 2023 to June 2024, a report said Saturday.

These tier-I cities, which have a large concentration of gig working opportunities, saw 63.11

per cent job applications originating from these urban hubs, a report by tech-enabled blue-collar workforce recruitment platform WorkIndia said.

Tier-II cities saw 26 per cent of such job openings and accounted for 25 per cent of applications, indicating balanced growth potential, the report said.

However, tier-III cities exhibited a lower proportion of job



openings (6.7 per cent) compared to 11 per cent applications, hinting at heightened competition amidst an oversupply of gig workers, the report stated.

The WorkIndia report, an annual index representing the state of blue collar workers in the Indian job market and hiring activity, is based on job listings on its platform during June 2023 to June 2024.

It further revealed that Delhi emerged as the prime hub for gig workers, leading with 17.7 per cent of job openings and 22.9 per cent of applications, reflecting robust demand across sectors.

This was followed by Mumbai with 16.57 per cent of job openings and 15.8 per cent of applications, while Bangalore and Pune showed promise as emerging gig economies, with focused efforts needed to attract more employers and workers.

Back-office roles dominated the gig economy job market, comprising 34.5 per cent of openings, followed by delivery executives (19.3 per cent) and cooks (16.3 per cent).

The rise in online marketing

roles (5.27 per cent) signals a growing demand for digital skills in the gig workforce, it said.

Majority of gig workers (60.56 per cent) are aged 18-29 years, while 30-49-year-old workers constitute 20.97 per cent of the workforce, it said.

Sector-wise, back-office roles, delivery services, and culinary positions lead in demand, with digital marketing roles on the rise.

"As the gig economy continues to expand, understanding these trends becomes increasingly crucial for stakeholders aiming to optimise their workforce strategies and capitalise on evolving market dynamics," WorkIndia Co-Founder and CEO Nilesh Dugarwal said.

# Krejcikova wears Wimbledon crown

Barbora Krejcikova wins Wimbledon for her second Grand Slam trophy by beating Jasmine Paolini

REUTERS

London, July 13: Barbora Krejcikova held off Italian crowd favourite Jasmine Paolini to win the Wimbledon singles title Saturday, coming through 6-2-6-6-4 on a sunlit Centre Court.

The Czech doubles specialist had dominated the opening set with a near-perfect display but was then rocked by a dazzling Paolini fightback which sent the showpiece into a decider.

A nervous third set swung Krejcikova's way when she broke serve at 3-3 and she went on to complete victory on her third match point, adding the Wimbledon title to the French Open crown she captured in 2021.

It was heartache for the popular Paolini who lost the French Open final a few weeks ago and was bidding to become the first Italian player to win a Wimbledon singles title.

Krejcikova, who also owns 10 doubles Grand Slam titles, including two at Wimbledon, is the latest in a long line of Czechs to win the singles at Wimbledon, following Marketa Vondrousova's triumph last year.

Krejcikova began the match in confident fashion, striking the ball sweetly on her way to a break of serve in the first game before holding for a 2-0 lead.

The 28-year-old from Brno was soon on the hunt for a double break but



Paolini weathered some fierce ball-striking in her next service game to get herself on the scoreboard.

The Centre Court crowd came alive in the fourth game as Paolini showed unbelievable court coverage to stay in the point but to no avail as Krejcikova held for 3-1.

Paolini was chit-chatting to herself between points, trying to fire herself

in the face of a Krejcikova onslaught but another dropped service game left her reeling.

Dominating the baseline exchanges with her extra power, Krejcikova pounced the opener in 35 minutes and Paolini disappeared off court, presumably for a deep breath.

The Italian returned with fire in her belly and immediately the momentum shifted as she seized on the first Krejcikova dip to move into a 3-0 lead with some fluent winners.

Suddenly it was Krejcikova who looked tight with consecutive double faults adding more fuel to the Paolini fire but the Czech steadied down to avoid slipping 4-0 behind.

It was all Paolini though in the second set as she rode a wave of fervent crowd support to take the final to a decider.

The momentum looked to be with Paolini but she wavered at 3-3 in the decider with a double fault handing over a break of serve. Krejcikova was rock-solid on serve as the title inched closer but looked consumed by nerves at 5-4.

Two match points came and went but she finally got the job done at the third attempt.

## GROOT BAGS 15TH STRAIGHT MAJOR TITLE

Dee de Groot secured her 15th consecutive Grand Slam title by winning the women's wheelchair final at Wimbledon Saturday for her sixth singles trophy at the All England Club. De Groot defeated fellow Dutchwoman Aniek van Koot 6-4, 6-4 on No 1 Court, sealing the victory with a backhand service return to extend her record streak of consecutive major titles and take her overall tally to 23 - also a record. She has won every Grand Slam tournament since the 2020 US Open and has 19 major doubles titles. The 27-year-old De Groot said the support for wheelchair tennis has come a long way in the seven years since she won her first Wimbledon title.



## Shubhankar, Aditi move ahead

North Berwick: India's Shubhankar Sharma squeezed inside the cut line at the Scottish Open, landing an eagle in his second round for a 2-under 68 here. Shubhankar is currently tied 63rd with a total of 3-under, where the cut fell. He had carded a 1-under 69 in the first round. Meanwhile Aditi Ashok also assured herself of the cut but fellow Indian Diksha Dagar withdrew before the truncated second round on medical grounds at the Amundi Evian Championship here. Play was suspended on the day due to lightning in the area.

## Riviera named golf site for LA Olympics

Lausanne: The International Golf Federation made it official by announcing with Los Angeles Olympic organisers that Riviera Country Club will host the golf competition in 2028. Riviera already has been preparing for the Los Angeles Games. A year ago, it had gold medalists Justin Rose (Rio de Janeiro) and Xander Schauffele pose at the fabled club alongside Olympic swimming champion Janet Evans. Riviera dates to 1926 and will celebrate its centennial anniversary in two years by hosting the US Women's Open for the first time. The course off Sunset Boulevard also will get another US Open in 2031 for the first time since Ben Hogan won in 1948.

# India secure Zimbabwe series

Jaiswal, Gill smash Zimbabwe bowlers as India take 3-1 lead in the five-match T20 series

This is the second time that India beat Zimbabwe by 10 wickets after a similar-margin win at the same venue in 2016

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Harare, July 13: Yashasvi Jaiswal's flair was complemented by skipper Shubman Gill's poise as young Indian team cantered to a 10-wicket victory over Zimbabwe in the fourth T20 International, taking an unassailable 3-1 lead in the five-match series.

Jaiswal and Gill's approach was in complete contrast as the Mumbai southpaw went hammer and tongs during his unbeaten 93-run knock while the skipper (58 not out) was ready to play the second fiddle in a chase of 153 which was completed in 15.2 overs.

The target was made to look way easier than it should have been on a track that had good bounce and carry.

Jaiswal, who had to sit out during the T20 World Cup campaign hardly looked rusty, playing shots all around the wicket.

The thumping bowler's back-drive off rival skipper Sikandar Raza was delightful and equally stylish was the pick-up pull off Richard Ngarava for a six.

The lack of pace in Zimbabwean attack on a good



wicket became home team's undoing as the dominant Jaiswal had reached his half-century with nine boundaries when the skipper was yet to reach 15.

There was no way that Zimbabwe could have stopped the run-feast as towards the end, the bigger interest was whether the two flag bearers of Indian batting into the next decade could reach their individual milestones of half-century and century.

It was Gill, who got his fifty and that didn't leave Jaiswal with enough runs to complete his hundred.

Earlier India's part-time bowlers Shivam Dube and Abhishek Sharma performed commendably in the middle overs to restrict Zimbabwe to a manageable 152 for seven after being put into bat by Gill.

**BRIEF SCORES**  
Zimbabwe: 152 for 7 in 20 overs (Wessly Madhevere 25, Tadiwanashe Marumani 32, Sikandar Raza 46; Khaled Ahmed 2/32) lose to India: 156 for no loss in 15.2 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 93 not out, Shubman Gill 58 not out).

## WIMBLEDON MEN'S FINAL

# Djoko ready for revenge

Novak Djokovic is 37 and had knee surgery last month but faces in-form defending champion Carlos Alcaraz

REUTERS

London, July 13: The Wimbledon men's singles final between defending champion Carlos Alcaraz and second seed Novak Djokovic takes place at the All England Club Sunday. The mixed doubles finals will also be contested.

Three-times Grand Slam champion Alcaraz landed in Wimbledon as the title favourite following his French Open triumph last month but few expected Djokovic to go far after his Roland Garros run was cut short by a knee injury.

However, the 37-year-old, who underwent surgery only five weeks ago, has defied the odds in his bid for a 25th Grand Slam, taking sole ownership of the all-time record he currently shares with Margaret Court.

Djokovic's steady return to top form in an otherwise shaky season has left fans at the All England Club and the world over salivating at the prospect of another thriller like the one the duo dished out 12 months ago, when Alcaraz won in five sets.

Last year's defeat by Alcaraz ended Djokovic's quest for a fifth straight title that would have



left him level with Roger Federer on eight Wimbledon trophies and the Serb will head to the clash on Sunday seeking revenge.

However, he will have his task cut out against an opponent who has never lost a Grand Slam final and is the youngest player in the professional era to win a major on all three surfaces.

Alcaraz has not been at his convincing best at Wimbledon this year but can still finish the tournament in elite company as a successful defence will make him only the second player in the professional era after Federer to win his first four major finals.

He can also become only the sixth man since 1968 to claim the Roland Garros and Wimbledon titles in the same year after Rod Laver, Bjorn Borg, Rafa Nadal, Federer and Djokovic.

## India's Sri Lanka tour schedule revised, start pushed back by a day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Mumbai, July 13: The schedule of India's upcoming white-ball tour of Sri Lanka has been revised, and the start of the contest pushed back by a day to July 27, the BCCI said Saturday.

The Indians will be touring the island nation later this month for three T20 Internationals and as many ODIs.

Originally, the first match - a T20 International - was to be played July 26, but it will now be held July 27, followed by the remaining two T20 games July 28 and July 30, with all the ties to be played at the Pallekele International Cricket Stadium.

The ODIs, initially scheduled to start August 1, will now begin August 2, followed by the remaining matches August 4 and August 7, with all the games to be held at R Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.



It will be India's first white-ball bilateral trip to the Island nation since 2021. David was the stand-in coach then, with Shikhar Dhawan leading a second-string side.

India had won both the T20I and ODI series on that occasion.

India is yet to announce the squad for the tour, but, as reported by PTI July 8, senior players such as Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma are set to be rested for this trip.

India will also have a new head coach in Gautam Gambhir, while the Sri Lankans will have a new man at the helm of affairs in Sanath Jayasuriya, who has been named as the interim head coach.

# Saudi Arabia to hold inaugural Olympic Esports Games

The introduction of the Olympic Esports Games is set to further enhance the credibility of Esports in India, establishing it as a viable sport and career option

The IOC's embrace of the Olympic Esports Games honours the dedication and skill of millions of gamers worldwide. It goes beyond just competition; it elevates Esports to a global platform, encouraging international collaboration and potentially ushering in a new generation of athletes

ROBY JOHN | CEO AND CO-FOUNDER, SUPERGAMING

AGENCIES

Paris, July 13: In a historic move, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has announced that the first-ever Olympic Esports Games will take place in Saudi Arabia in 2025.

This decision follows the recent proposal by the IOC's Executive Board and will be presented at the IOC Session ahead of the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

The IOC has entered a 12-year partnership with the National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Saudi Arabia to host the Olympic Esports Games.

As per the official announcement, HRH Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki Al Faisal, Minister of Sport and President of the Saudi Arabian Olympic and Paralympic Committee remarked, "The world is invited to join us in 2025 and celebrate this moment together."

Indian Esports, already on the



rise, stands to gain significantly from this development. Following a bronze medal win in DOTA 2 at the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and competing in five titles at the 2022 Asian Games in Hangzhou, India's Esports scene is on track for further growth.

Expressing his enthusiasm for the groundbreaking development, Akshat Rathee, Co-founder and MD of NODWIN Gaming, said, "NODWIN Gaming is thrilled that esports has earned its place in the Olympics with its own standalone event, akin to the Summer, Winter,

and Paralympics. This recognition allows countries to develop independent esports programs. Together with our partners in the GEF and the EWC, NODWIN Gaming is eager to build esports in our core growth markets, seizing this opportunity for hope and glory."

The IOC launched its first Esports pilot, the Olympic Virtual Series, in 2021 followed by the Olympic Esports Week in Singapore in June 2023. This event brought together over 130 players from around the world, competing in 10 mixed-gender categories, attracting over 500,000 unique participants and six million views, with 75% of the audience aged 13 to 34.

**A CHANCE TO BE PART OF**

**METTLE MEET 2024**

**OrissaPOST**

**QUIZ Extravaganza**

It's time for **METTLE MEET** - an initiative by the state's only homegrown English daily to revive quizzing in Odisha. This year, the **Preliminaries** will take place **August 3** and the **Grand Finale August 4**. Like in previous years, most of the top educational institutions of Odisha - both schools and colleges will be competing for the **Grand Prize of ₹1,00,000** in the Junior and Senior segments.

**RULES & REGULATIONS**

- Everyone will have to mail their answers to [mettlemeet@orissapost.com](mailto:mettlemeet@orissapost.com)
- Answers to the questions will follow the next day. The names of the winners will also be announced along with their pictures.
- Answers mailed between 8.00am to 6.00pm each day will be considered valid.
- Orissa POST's** decision on all entries will be final. No complaints will be entertained.
- Participants must send their entries with a **passport size photograph, mobile numbers and residential address**. Otherwise the entries will be rejected.
- There can be only one winner from one family.
- Invitation cards to the winners will only be issued on presentation of **Valid ID proof - Voter Card, Aadhaar Card, Driving License, Passport, School ID card** (In case of students till Class XI)
- No employee of **Orissa POST** or their family members can be part of the competition

**TODAY'S QUESTION**

This syndrome is used to describe children with weak mental and/or physical traits, especially those who have suffered tremendous emotional stress due to parental neglect and abuse. It is also used to refer to children who grew up without the influence of human contact. What syndrome, inspired by a literary character?

**ANSWER TO SATURDAY'S QUESTION**

**Scrooge McDuck**

**THE TWO LUCKY WINNERS**

**SHOUMIK JENA** **AKANKSHA PRADHAN**

**Others who answered correctly are**  
Ashish Agarwalla, Ratnesha Baral, Dibyajyoti Praharaj, Jignesh Kumar, Bhumika Subhalaxmi, Nibedita Mohanty, R Sekhar Rao, Prithviraj Padhy, Jaba Dasgupta